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Men'sHealth

23 BIGGEST FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2023

➔

JONATHAN MAJORS

HOW MARVEL'S BADDEST VILLAIN BUILT THIS BODY

STRONG FOR LIFE

18 ½ WAYS TO BOOST MENTAL STRENGTH

VISIT…

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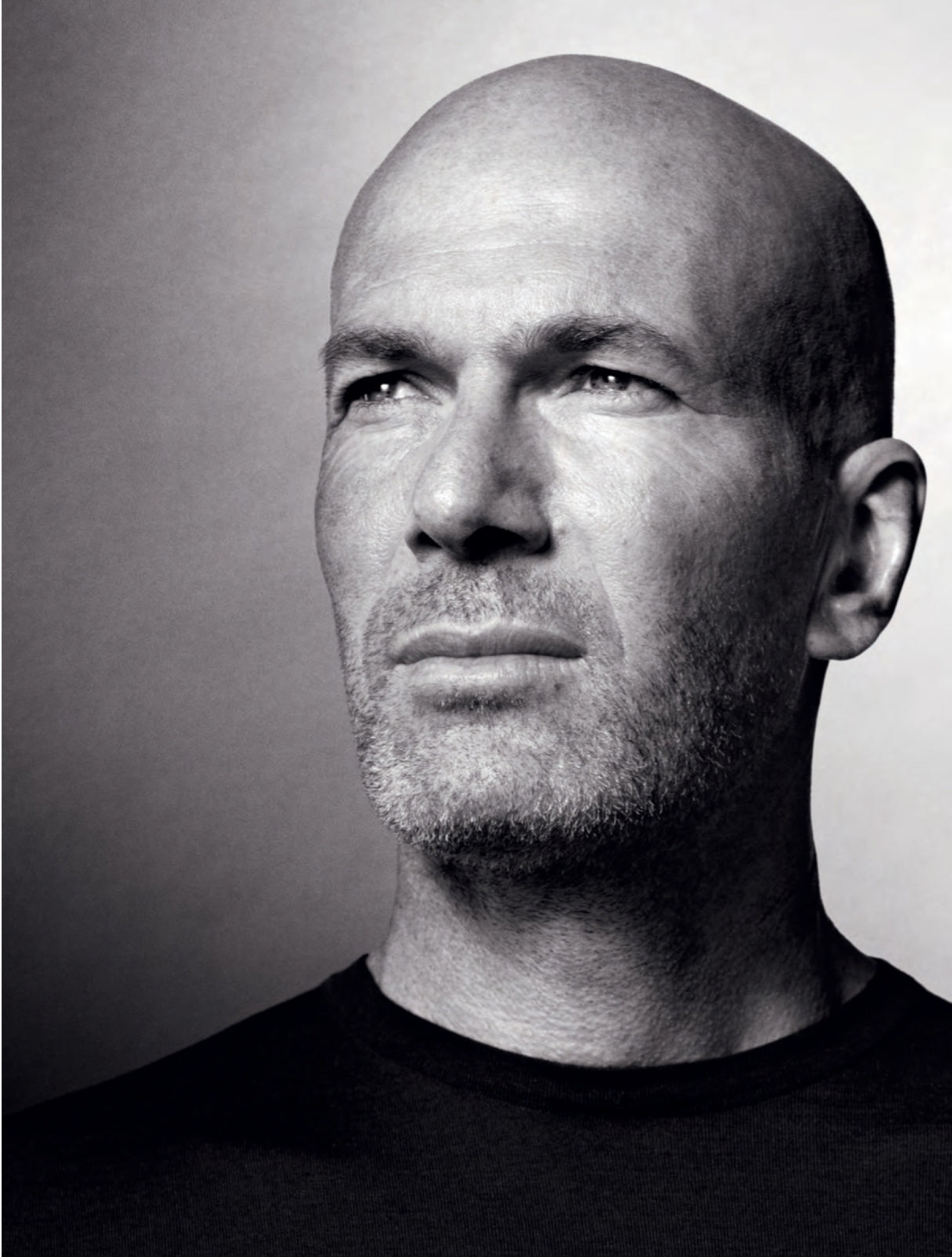
Caliente.COM



MONTBLANC
LEGEND

THE FRAGRANCE FOR MEN
ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Women's Health

SPORTS BRA SPECIAL!

ANGELIQUE DAUBERMANN
(A.k.a @Theleangirl)
ON HACKING YOUR WEIGHT LOSS WITH SCIENCE

REACH YOUR GOALS

Get Your Sweat On Even When You Don't Feel Like It
+
Set Firmer Boundaries Minus The Guilt
+
Unpause Your Life Starting Now!

SLOWER REPS
FASTER RESULTS
THIS FITNESS METHOD WORKS WONDERS

Baby Got (A Bad) Back
How To Stop Sitting Like A Shrimp

Balance Your Blood Sugar With Food
Delish Recipes Inside
p108

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Women'sHealth
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MH

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PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON KEULEMANS

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PHOTOGRAPH BY AB + DM

FOREVER. FASTER.
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SHOP PUMA TRAINING

YANBU,
SAUDI
ARABIA

THE DAKAR RALLY is a grueling endurance event that takes place over multiple stages and pits racers against unforgiving landscapes, with each section taking the better part of a workday to complete. A single event could see drivers wrestle with sections of steep—and slippery—dunes, traversing rocks and revving through mud. Giniel de Villiers, who won the event in 2009 as part of the Toyota Gazoo team, is a veteran of the sport, and finds himself returning year after year for the unpredictable nature of every race. “The biggest challenge is that you never know what you are going to face each day,” he adds. You’re often confronted with hazards, obstacles or complications that force you to be quick on your feet (or the brakes). “It’s the most demanding and challenging race in the world by far,” he says. And the feeling of finishing it? “Nothing comes close.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCELO MARAGNI / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

“THE HARDEST STAGES CHALLENGE YOU MENTALLY THE MOST BECAUSE WHAT STOPS YOU FROM GOING FASTER IS YOUR BODY NOT BEING ABLE TO TAKE THE HITS ANYMORE. THE CARS ARE STRONG AND YOUR BODY GIVES IN BEFORE THE CAR WILL.” *– GINIEL DE VILLIERS, RALLY DRIVER FOR TOYOTA GAZOO*

INSIDE STORY

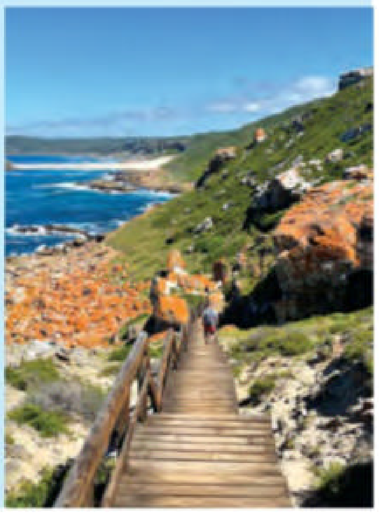
The pursuit of happiness has become misguided. In offices, at the gym, you name it; you'll find guys working with tunnel-visioned focus, betting future joy on achieving big goals. While the hustle is admirable—and necessary—we're neglecting something important: our mental health. So when someone close to you, that you have known for decades, takes their own life, you feel shellshocked—just as I did when I lost my friend. Amidst the pain, it forced me to refocus. After all, where the mind goes the body follows, and no big promotion or ensemble of bulging muscles can stand in the face of a serious psychological crisis. And, if the research is to be believed, things are only getting worse. Constant struggles are chipping away at our collective resilience. Life is tough and Covid, plus depression linked to Long Covid, has not made it any easier. Not to mention the impact of added financial pressures and unemployment that came with the pandemic. Bottom line: we're much less happy than we could be. But this isn't a losing battle—far from it. Small changes to your day can make massive waves, turning the tides against problems of the mind that might otherwise fester and plunge us into a dark place. We're talking about transferring your dogged commitment to reps and renovating your meal plan to overhauling your mental state, too. That's why this issue is so important, each page a reminder of the steps we should be taking every day to build the resilience necessary to feel stable, content and equipped to deal with any problem.

In 2020, there were on average 130 deaths by suicide per day. Men made up almost 70% of those deaths

Faced with compounding stress, I felt myself standing on the doorstep of burnout. I reached the point where I knew an intervention was in order. I headed for Plett for a change of scenery, swapping city life for ocean air and hikes through natural surroundings. The geographic shift also gave me a change of perspective, giving me a chance to… well, breathe. And amidst the chaos of this busy world, these opportunities to reflect, reset and recalibrate (however brief) can make all the difference.

Our lead feature **We Need to Talk** (p.64) on suicide and the South African man by our Deputy Editor, Kieran Legg, might be something that resonates with you. This issue will help you turn your attention inward and start building strength from within—turn to p.70 for **18½ Ways to Boost Mental Strength**. The goal this issue: bring body and mind into alignment to prove that real strength isn't just skin-deep.

Rob



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GET A PERFECT LOOK AROUND THE CLOCK

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THE MH INTERVIEW

WEATHER THE STORM

CHRIS BERTISH IS AN ADVENTURER WHOSE FEATS OF ENDURANCE (AND MENTAL GRIT) ARE PROOF THAT THE MIND CAN TRULY CONQUER ANY MATTER.

WHEN CHRIS BERTISH set "sail" on a 7,500km solo and unsupported paddleboard trip across the Atlantic, he wasn't fearless. His mind ran with all the possible outcomes, the challenges he might face along the way and those hair-raising scenarios that could dash his ambitions (quite literally) on the rocks.

"People see adventurers and think they're immune to the mental struggles everyone else goes through," says Bertish. "That couldn't be further from the truth."

Those mental battles are fierce, and constant—especially when you're halfway across the Atlantic, the weather turns and you're taking a physical beating. There are moments of doubt, hopelessness and everything in between. But it's within tackling those powerful emotions; accepting them and breaking each challenge down into bite-sized chunks that the insurmountable starts to feel not just doable, but ready to conquer.

"You have to accept that you're going to get knocked down," he says. "You'll also have to learn not to be hard on yourself. Take what you've learned and use it as an opportunity to grow."

CHANGING TIDES

"Humans don't like change, it feels like a threat," says Bertish. "So we keep things the same, stay in our routines. Problem is, when we then encounter the unforeseen, it feels overwhelming."

Out on the ocean, even with robust planning for almost every situation, the unforeseen is a constant presence. You can't predict the weather, the wildlife or even the onboard equipment. When something went wrong, which was often, Bertish didn't have time to overthink. It was either survive or surrender himself to the sea.

But, as Bertish puts it, he's dealt with the unforeseen consistently, week on week for most of his adult life. Those reps translate into real grit because when something goes off script, it doesn't feel like a catastrophe.

"The trick is you have to do something every day, or even every week, that's new, challenging and takes you out of your comfort zone," says Bertish.

No, you don't have to straddle a paddleboard and head across the ocean, you just have to search for novelty and friction. That means getting off the beaten track just for an hour or two: try a new sport, find a fresh hiking trail or even try your hand at public speaking (especially if you, like Bertish, are terrified by the prospect). Shaking your routines, and challenging yourself, will make sure you've got mental resilience in droves when the shit finally hits the fan.

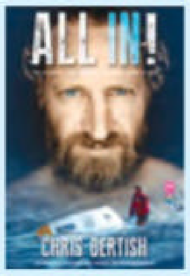
ALWAYS IN FRAME

There's another tool Bertish employs and that's "framing". He says most people are primed to see the negative consequences of a given action, opportunity, you name it. However, a subtle shift in perspective—i.e., sieving for the positive—can make a massive difference to how you deal with any situation.

"So you've had a bad experience," says Bertish. "You could sit there and dwell on how it's going to make your life more difficult, or you could look at the ways this moment can positively affect your life going ahead."

He recommends asking three important questions: What did I learn from this? How can I grow from this? And what opportunity could I be getting from this moment? With proper introspection, you can find lessons in even the harshest criticism or biggest blunders.

"You start to treat everything as a puzzle," says the adventurer. "The brain loves to solve puzzles, it wants to solve them. It forces you to be proactive, and you'll start to look for innovative solutions rather than sitting with negative consequences."



► **FOLLOW** the highs and lows of Chris Bertish's 7,500km solo, unassisted stand-up paddleboard voyage in *All In!* ***(R358, Exclusive Books)***

WORDS: KIERAN LEGG | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG KOLESKY

GET
TURNED
ON[1]

Special moments should be spontaneous and not hampered by timing or finances

Speak to your Doctor or Pharmacist about an affordable prescription medication for Erectile Dysfunction.

GET TURNED ON

OVERCOME ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Reference: 1. Product prescribing information, March 2021.

For full prescribing information please refer to the professional information approved by the Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA).

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THE BIG QUESTION

I'VE BARELY MADE IT TO THE GYM LATELY, BUT I'M ON MY FEET ALL DAY. WHAT COUNTS AS 'EXERCISE'?

AN ACTIVE JOB DELIVERS BENEFITS IN THE LONG RUN

IF PAYING YOUR DUES in the squat rack has dropped off your list of priorities lately, you're far from alone. Along with complaining about Eskom (and traffic), we're quite adept at skipping workouts, too.

According to a World Health Organisation study, almost 40% of us are considered "dangerously inactive". In other words, we're falling way too short of reaching the baseline of recommended physical activity, and that's just the bare minimum.

But the reality might not be as glum as the stats suggest. Most people have a misconception about what constitutes exercise, viewing it as activities performed purely for the purpose of building fitness or burning fat. "This isn't the case," says Adam Byrne, clinical fitness lead for Nuffield Health. Carrying shopping bags, mowing the lawn, chasing your kids, taking the stairs —all of that falls under the bracket of "moderate activity", of which you need just 150 minutes a week.

If weight loss is your goal, this kind of movement—which is often referred to as "non-exercise activity thermogenesis" or NEAT —has more of an impact than you might think: most estimates suggest NEAT contributes to 15% to 30% of your daily calorie burn, compared with 5% to 15% for scheduled exercise.

But it's not all about the calories. The NHS advises strength work twice a week, too. And this doesn't just mean "squatting and lifting—although that's great", says Byrne. "From rugby and rowing to working on a building site and, to a certain degree, yoga, all of these are forms of strength training."

Intensity matters, as well as duration. If all your activity falls into the "moderate" band (slightly raised heart rate and body temperature, quicker breathing), your endurance will improve but you won't see major gains to your anaerobic capacity—your ability to perform quick bursts of movement at max effort; the kind of intensity at which you couldn't hold a conversation comfortably, such as hefting a heavy bag of fertiliser to the other side of the garden.

If your daily routine doesn't tax you quite that much, you might want to reconsider renewing that gym membership after all.

WORDS: SCARLETT WRENCH; OLIVIA GILBERT | PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN FEE | ARTWORK: PETER CROWTHER AT DEBUT ART | ILLUSTRATION: BEN MOUNSEY-WOOD *SOURCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF SPORT SCIENCE

TEXT A PT

IS THE MIND-MUSCLE CONNECTION AN ACTUAL THING OR JUST A MYTH?

Today 10.48am

And can I really accelerate my strength gains just by focusing on the muscle I'm working?

It's real. And it's worth trying, too.

Hmmm. Always thought it was bro science. 🤔

That's fair. But another name for bro science is lived experience. Lifters are often ahead of the people in white coats when it comes to knowing what works.

Take the concept of a "mind-muscle connection". Arnie's been on about it for decades—the idea of mentally getting inside the muscle rather than just heaving away. And he did okay.

Sure. But it also might have been 100 other things that worked for Arnie, right?

No doubt. But US researchers ran a study* with one group focusing on the outcome of a lift and the other on the muscle contraction.

The second group achieved far superior gains in strength and hypertrophy (growth), particularly in the upper body.

Any tips?

Yeah. On the lifting phase of every rep, think—or say—"contract"!

I'll give it a shot. 💪

Ben Williams, PT and manager of North Shore Gym in Sydney, Australia **BW**

THE FITNESS

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MY RUNNING ROUTINE A LITTLE LESS BORING?

If your Spotify playlist is losing its power and your regular routes no longer hold your interest, try mixing things up with an audio-guided session. Here are three worth a trial run:

AAPTIV

Best for: change of pace Sticking to a workout plan can be tough, especially if it's repetitive. Aaptiv's impressive collection of audio classes lets you switch up your exercise regime with countless guided runs, ranging in length and intensity, for both treadmill and outdoor runners. *Free 7-day trial then R260 per month, aaptiv.com*

NIKE RUN CLUB

Best for: clearing your head NRC's "Mindful Running Pack" delivers 15 running meditations led by Headspace co-founder Andy Puddicombe. Each session has a different purpose, from pep talks to pushing you through a motivation drought, and features uplifting coaching to help you get the most out of your run. *Free, nike.com/nrc-app*

WITHU

Best for: phone-free training The Apple Watch-compatible fitness app, WithU, means you can leave your phone at home and focus on training. Connect your headphones to your smartwatch and listen to guided workouts, from runs to strength training sessions, distraction-free. *Free, R215 per month for unlimited access, withutraining.com*

WHAT SUPP?

PRE-WORKOUTS GIVE ME THE JITTERS. ANY BETTER OPTIONS?

Whether you don't tolerate caffeine well or like to train closer to bedtime, there are supplements out there that don't mimic the effects of a triple espresso. It's not vital that you dose up before hitting the weights room—but a few choice ingredients might give your efforts a boost in the long term. Here are our picks:

All-Day BCAA ***R239, rebelstore.co.za***

This packs 5g of BCAAs for healthy muscle function and repair, plus compounds like L-Leucine which may aid in protein synthesis and muscle recovery.

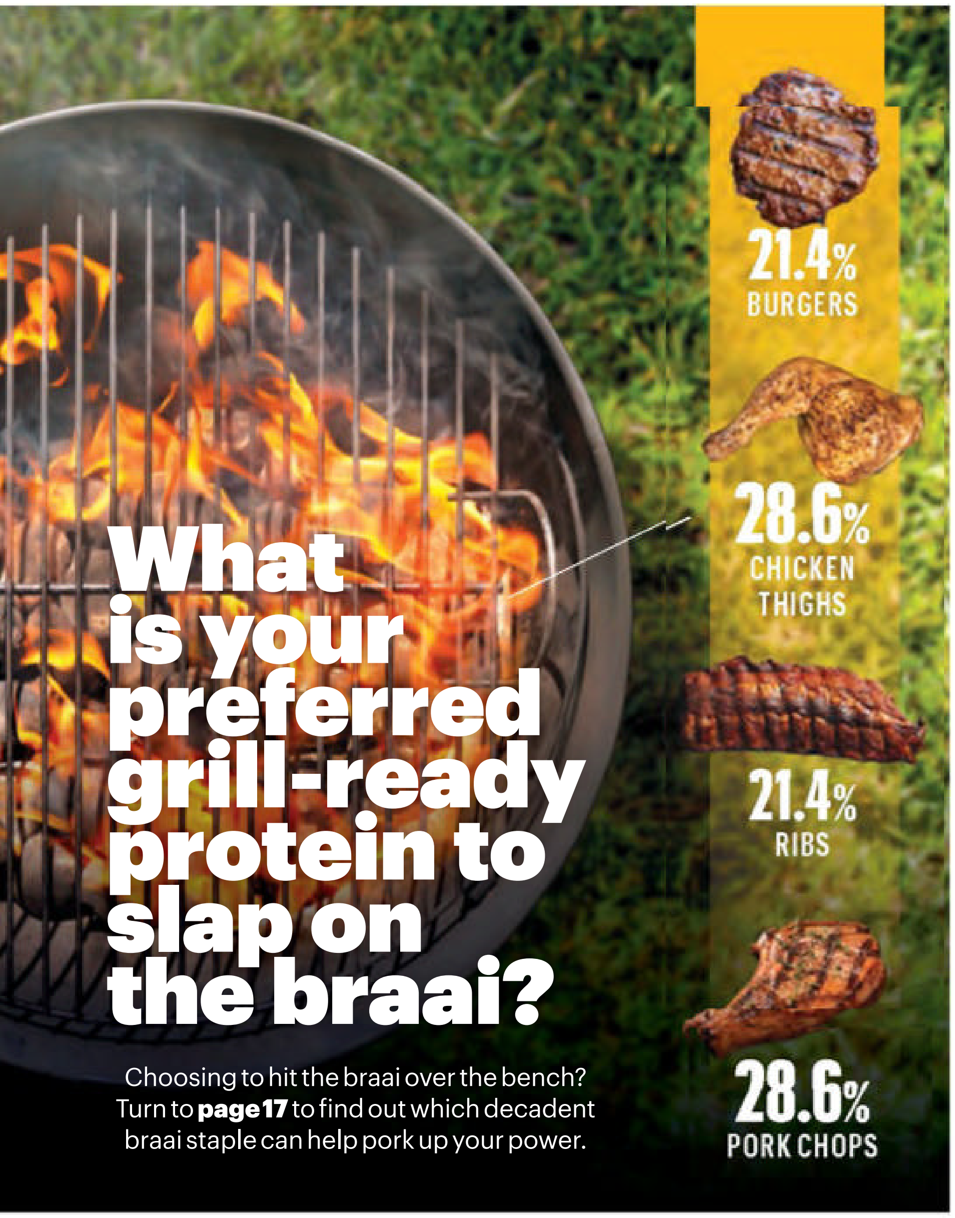
USN BCAA 12:1:1 ***R309, usn.co.za***

A similar boost from BCAAs, plus glutamine to bolster your immunity and chromium to help regulate blood-sugar levels.

Sir Fruit Spicy Turmeric Shot ***R204 for 12 shots, sirfruit.com***

Keeping it natural? Juiced turmeric boosts our nitrate levels, which improves our endurance. Bonus: this shot contains cayenne pepper which has been shown to aid digestion.

THIS MONTH IN THINGS YOU'RE PSYCHED ABOUT...



What is your preferred grill-ready protein to slap on the braai?

Choosing to hit the braai over the bench? Turn to **page 17** to find out which decadent braai staple can help pork up your power.

HOW MUCH SHUTEYE ARE YOU GETTING?

3 - 5 hours: 6.7%

5 - 7 hours: 73.3%

7 - 9 hours: 20%

Sometimes, even with the best intentions, those solid seven hours are elusive. Turn to **page 61** to see what happens when you're constantly cutting your snooze time short.

DO YOU USE YOUR SMARTWATCH'S DATA TO TRACK YOUR WORKOUTS?

YES: 55%

NO: 45%

Those little digits streamed from your wearables can tell you a lot—but not everything. On **page 58**, your guide to getting the most out of your smartwatch.

DOES PRE-WORKOUT GIVE YOU THE JITTERS?

YES: 57.5%

NO: 42.5%

Find yourself feeling like you've just knocked back a triple espresso before jumping on a rollercoaster? On **page 15**, our top picks for jitter-free gym juice.

WHAT OIL DO YOU TAG IN WHEN IT'S TIME TO SIZZLE?

OLIVE OIL: 66.7%

COCONUT OIL: 22.2%

VEGETABLE OIL: 11.1%

Your prostate! Your heart! Your hair! Is there anything the oil on **page 60** can't help? We checked out the science to give you the squeeze.

IMAGES BY GETTY IMAGES

HAVE YOUR SAY: VOTE IN THE NEXT POLLS ON TWITTER @MENSHEALTHZA

QUESTION

WHAT DECADENT BRAAI DISH CAN PORK UP YOUR PULLING POWER?

ANSWER

Ribs

ADAM AND EVE, WEARIED by their amorous play, lie on crumpled bedsheets. The corrupting serpent stretches out across her breasts; stitches in his side reveal the hole from where she was plucked by the hand of God. And above them reads the caption: "Sinfully tempting ribs".

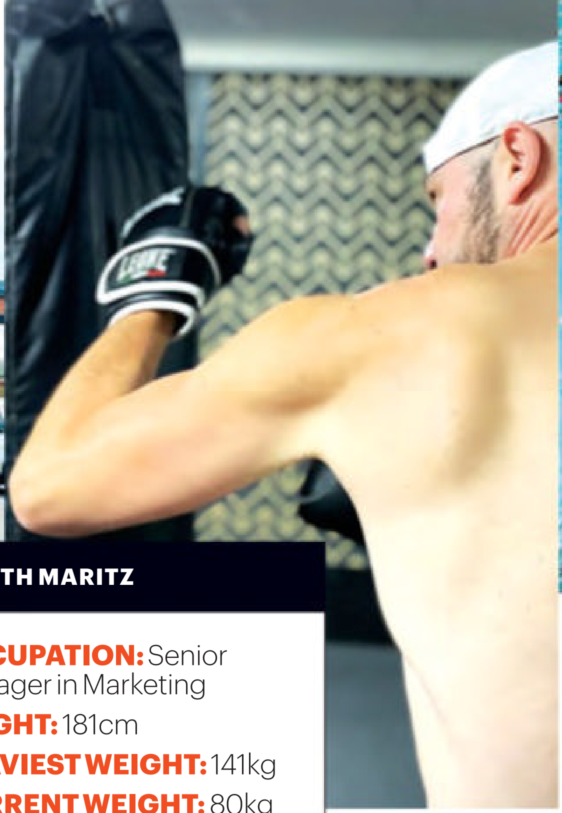
So went the weirdly biblical ad campaign for the Singaporean grill restaurant *Bobby's Taproom*, which felt it appropriate to compare the love of barbecued ribs to some sort of satanically inspired, onanistic compulsion. Adam's prominent scar reminds you that when he does it with Eve, he's actually doing it with a part of himself.

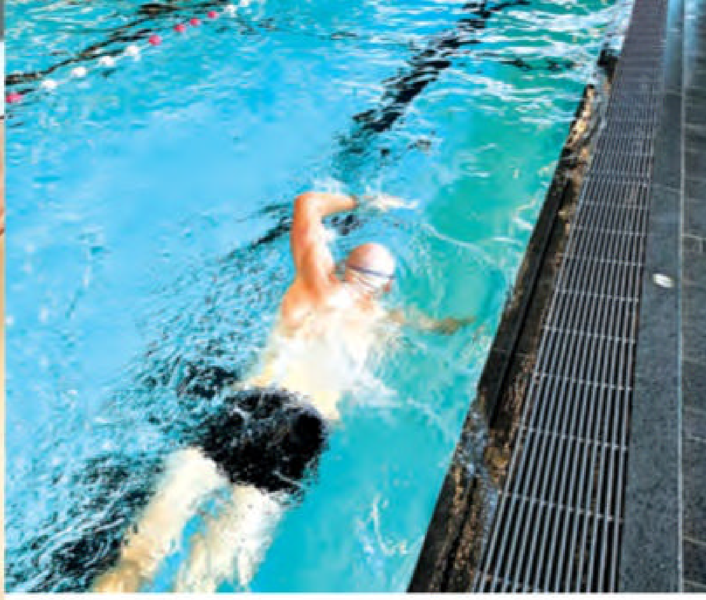
As mildly disconcerting as that advert was, there was a certain logic to it. Ribs, suffused with more connective tissue and tasty fat than any other part of a pig, are prized by meat eaters seeking the biggest, most indulgent flavours. And eating them is a science-backed form of self-love, especially for those who feel trapped on a training plateau.

Vitamin B12 is a micronutrient that is crucial to developing oxygen-carrying red blood cells, maintaining good brain function and supporting a healthy metabolism—as well as keeping up your energy levels, whether in a gym or in front of a laptop. Deficiencies can leave you feeling sluggish, keeping your workouts stuck in first gear and dashing your hopes of speedy weight loss or new muscle.

Thankfully, a melt-in-the-mouth 85g serving of braaied pork spare ribs packs around a third of your daily B12 requirements. While beef offers a higher payload, pork is richer in Vitamins B1, B3, B5 and B6. And as we get older, our bodies find it harder to absorb, so going for seconds of this meaty medication is perfectly justified—especially since vitamin B12 only occurs naturally in animal products. (Veggies have to supp it.) Satisfy your lust and tuck in. Trust us, it's no sin at all.

WORDS: YO ZUSHI | PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL HEDGE





GARETH MARITZ

OCCUPATION: Senior Manager in Marketing
HEIGHT: 181cm
HEAVIEST WEIGHT: 141kg
CURRENT WEIGHT: 80kg

BRAND NEW BODY

TIPPING THE SCALES AND LAPSING INTO ZERO SELF-ESTEEM, GARETH MARITZ KNEW IT WAS TIME FOR AN IMAGE OVERHAUL. HERE'S HOW HE SHED THE WEIGHT AND DISCOVERED A NEW WAY OF LIFE.

GARETH WAS A PROMISING rugby player who took to the pitch for Valke, a Currie Cup first division side. But when injury struck and cut his career short, the budding sportsman found himself on the sidelines. What followed was a series of "rewards" in the form of calorie-dense cheat snacks: "Pizzas, droewors, chocolates and alcohol," he says. He also went from daily training sessions to not exercising at all.

THE SETBACK

Comfort eating became second nature for Gareth, who began structuring his life—including social activities—around the table. He'd meet friends for breakfast at a café, grab takeaways for lunch and then finish up with multiple courses at a dinner spot. This downward slide only steepened when he moved to Europe and the office's canteen became his new haunt. "I remember grabbing the 'bacon pot' for breakfast every morning," he says. "Simply put, that's about 50 slices of bacon stuffed into a takeaway pot usually reserved for soup or cereal."

THE WAKE-UP CALL

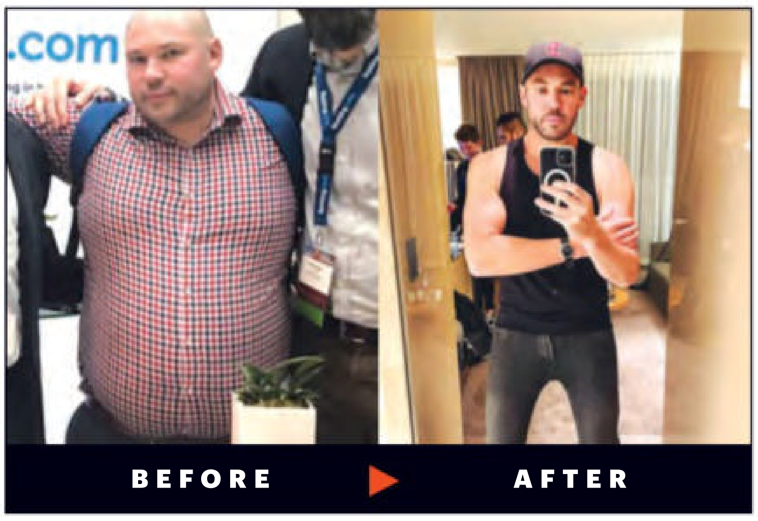
After a weekend of binging, and netting a grand total of 31 steps across both days (for reference, those were the steps between his bed and the kitchen), Gareth began to suspect he was in bad shape. When his healthcare provider denied him insurance on the basis of his obesity, he was—however—still perplexed. "I still didn't think I was overweight," he admits. That's when a colleague stepped in to intervene, hitting him with some hard truths: "He told me I looked like I was 50 years old," he says. "He could see I was unhappy, that I lacked confidence, that my life was limited to work, food and nothing else." Rough, but exactly what Gareth needed to hear.

THE CHANGE

Keep it simple, and realistic. That was Gareth's motto embarking on his weight loss journey. He focused on racking up 10 000 steps each day, breaking his walks into 20 mins of morning exertions and another 15 to cap off the workday. "Anyone who says they can't find the time to do that is lying to themselves," he says. Once this habit was in place, he turned his attention to his meals. He started tracking calories, making sure he didn't exceed the flood line of 2 000 calories. (Typically you want to take your maintenance energy threshold minus 500 to start torching fat.) As the world was in the midst of a lockdown, Gareth didn't have access to gyms or home workout tools, so he made the most of what he had at his disposal. Now that restrictions have been lifted, he logs four sessions at the gym every week. But he says it doesn't matter what you do, just do something consistently: "You're just trying to increase activity and reduce calories."

THE REWARD

Besides being able to climb a flight of stairs without gasping for air? He feels comfortable taking his shirt off. That means no more jumping into the local pool donning a baggy T-shirt, or sweating out in a sauna drowning in extra threads. Shopping, too, has become much easier because he's no longer hunting for those elusive 46" waistbands (right now, he's at a svelte 30). He's certain any guy can do this: "You just have to be realistic and clear about setting a manageable goal," he says. "Understand that it takes time, and don't just give up after one cheat meal or missed gym session."


BEFORE ▶ AFTER

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WORDS: KIERAN LEGG | IMAGES SUPPLIED

ALL GUNS

BLAZING

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Zinc sulphate, Selenium AAC 2%, Lycopene 10%, Lactose, Fructose
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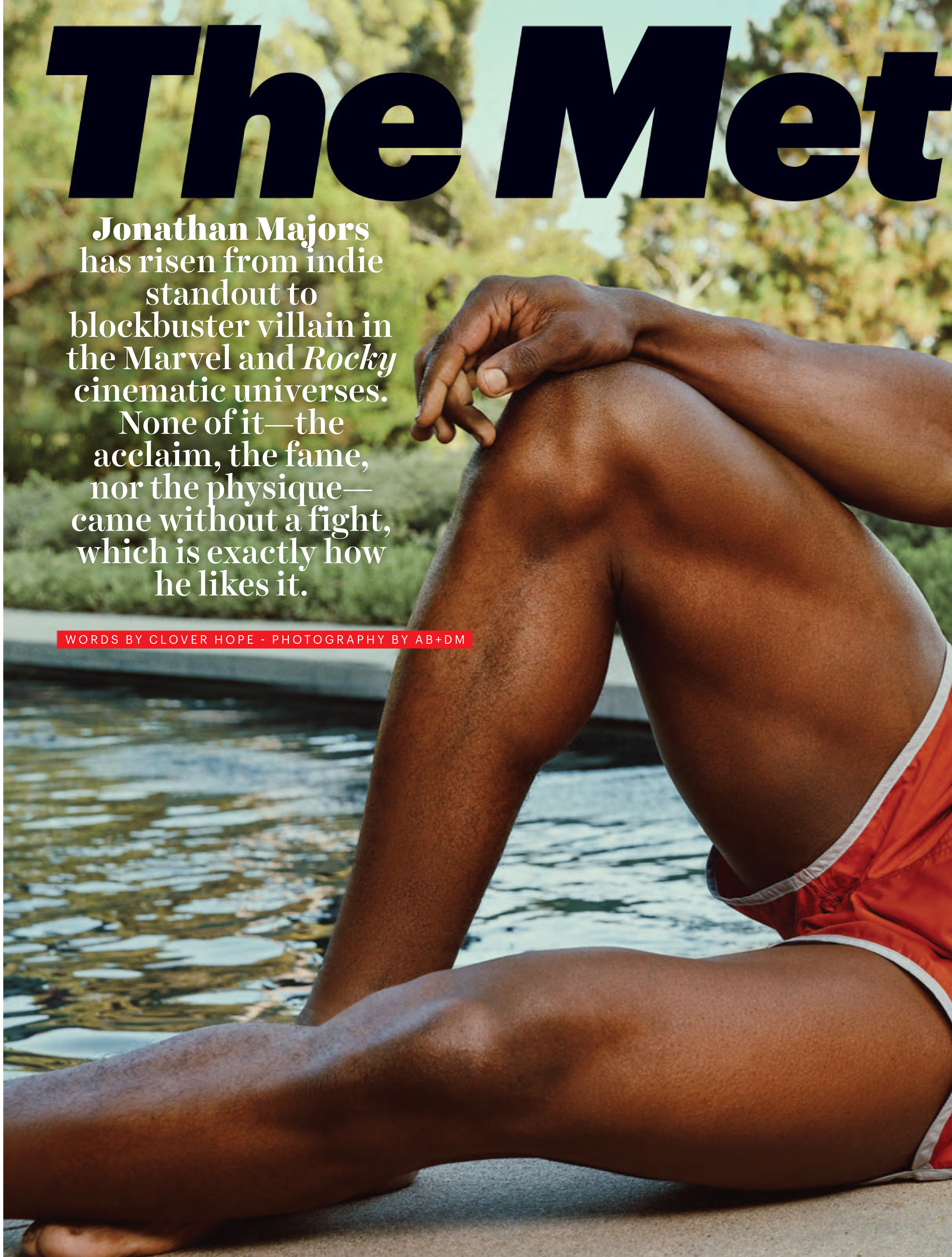
The Met



Jonathan Majors has risen from indie standout to blockbuster villain in the Marvel and *Rocky* cinematic universes. None of it—the acclaim, the fame, nor the physique—came without a fight, which is exactly how he likes it.

WORDS BY CLOVER HOPE - PHOTOGRAPHY BY AB+DM

hod Man

Jonathan Majors does not like to take it easy.

MAJORS ISN'T ONE FOR DOWNTIME

If you ask him to become a pilot, a professional boxer or a bodybuilder for a role, the 33-year-old actor will commit to several months of brutal cardio, strength training and mental conditioning until his muscles bulge and he fails his way to perfection. By the time he's ready to perform, he will have become who he needs to be. "If I'm going to bench-press 115kg in a film, I need to be able to bench-press 125kg a few times," he says, then corrects himself: "140kg a few times."

On set, it's the same story. Hand him fake weights for a scene and he'll look at you with incredulity and tell you in the politest, sincerest tone, "You're fucking kidding me," as he did while playing two of the most physically demanding roles of his career: a rough-edged boxer in the latest installment of the *Rocky* universe, *Creed III*, and an asocial bodybuilder in the dark drama *Magazine Dreams*. For both of the projects, Majors lifted real weights during filming.

"I will do this all day. We are not putting fake weights on. I haven't been training for the past three months to get here and use Styrofoam," Majors says on a hot and sunny day in London. "Put these fucking weights on so we can lift it, so you can shoot it, so I can tell the story." Respectfully, anything less is "like putting fake tears in your eyes. Or putting fake sweat on you. This is it. This is it! Let's go", he laughs.

It's a little past 8am on Hampstead Heath, and the shutters of Kenwood House aren't yet open. Majors is on a bench overlooking the sprawling 17th-century manor. Despite the unseasonably warm weather, the Texas-bred actor is dressed in joggers and a pinstripe shirt. The best guess is that he's in London filming a Marvel title. He won't say. In 2021, Majors debuted as the demented *He Who Remains* in the season one finale of Loki. That cameo has Marvel fans giddy about what he will accomplish as the Avengers' next significant threat, Kang the Conqueror.

In talking to Majors for two and a half hours, you witness the extreme discipline he possesses. He is equal parts focus and sensitivity, and he wears his drive like a second skin. When the Michael Jordan documentary *The Last Dance* aired in 2020, Majors had friends texting him, "I understand you better now." In conversation, he's quick to affirm his dedication to his work, which includes three new films. *Devotion* explores the real-life camaraderie between two naval aviators, Jesse Brown (Majors) and Tom Hudner, played by *Top Gun: Maverick's* Glen Powell. Then he turns up as *Kang in Ant-Man And The Wasp: Quantumania*. He will also shoot the film adaptation of *The Man In My Basement*, a thriller based on Walter Mosley's book about preserving a cherished family home.

Majors stands out in a world short on new, exciting movie stars. His portfolio is like a capsule collection of art films, including his 2019 breakout, *The Last Black Man In San Francisco*; historical adventure stories and westerns (Spike Lee's *Da 5 Bloods* and ensemble pic *The Harder They Fall*); and black horror series *Lovecraft Country*, for which he was Emmy nominated. He not only savours a challenge but seeks them out. "When I look at a script, I look at the level of difficulty," he says. "If it's going to be easy, I don't want to do it. The fitness community is going to scrutinise *Magazine Dreams*. The navy is going to scrutinise *Devotion*."

Majors has proved himself as a multifaceted leading man, and he's about to level up with consecutive roles that combine his physical and mental strengths. He's shepherding Marvel through a crucial phase as the next big villain while pursuing indie projects, dealing with great expectations while still making savvy art. More than pulling off his own stunts, which he does, he's concerned with convincing the audience that his characters are real. "People have been following this character for two hours sometimes. I've been trying so hard to tell the truth, which is not easy," he says. "A part of you will know. That's Kang, but that's not my Kang. That's Kang adjacent. That's a stunt guy. In *The Harder They Fall*, I ride a horse in a very particular way. You put a stunty on that and they go, 'He don't got the swag. His head ain't bopping.' You should never once think it's not him. You know it's him. So you trust in him."

Whatever it takes to establish that trust, Majors will do. Over the past year, he's packed on 5kg of muscle to play Kang, an extra 2.5kg for *Creed III* and 3kg more for *Magazine Dreams*. And he's whittled his way down to 5% body fat to look believably ripped. Not every actor has the impulse or discipline to transform their body the way Majors does. He has that instinct in common with his characters, who wrestle with tragedy and have something to prove. It can come from ambition. But Majors knows better than anyone that on the flip side of ambition are deeper, much more complex motivations. Details about his *Creed III* character, Anderson Dame, are under lock and key, but what Majors will say is that

Rapid Fire

Cheat meal?
"A burger at Shake Shack."

Last podcast you recommended to a friend?
"This Jungian Life."

Motto?
"What are you waiting for?"

Last time you cried?
"Last night. I was FaceTiming my daughter and she was telling me about her first day of school."

Meal you cook to impress someone?
"Spaghetti bolognese. My grandma's recipe."

Euphemism for sex?
"Take a nap."

Most important quality in a romantic partner?
"Understanding."

every fibre of Dame's brawn comes from trauma. "There are certain reasons you build your body," he says. "Dame's body was built from loss. He had lost something, and that hole is what made him work the way he worked. When you see Dame's body, you go, 'Oh, that makes sense.' You don't look like that and be happy with life." In contrast, his *Magazine Dreams* character, Killian, who's using bodybuilding as a coping mechanism, is fuelled by rage. "That's a pain body. A lot of guys build their bodies by anger, which is a secondary emotion," says Majors. "And those bodies don't look right. Those bodies don't engender emotion." Beyond aesthetics, he wants his characters' bodies to convey emotional strength. "When you see these guys, it's like, 'Yeah, they're fucking fit.' But if you look at it, there's a story there." So what's his story?

The Fire Within

Majors has been in Jordan-esque attack mode since he was 17, when his high school coaches put him on the B team. "Basketball, football—I was a B-teamer," he says. "I was like, 'You got me fucked up.' No disrespect to the B team, but I felt like I'm better than that guy. I'm faster than that guy." Majors was a churchgoing kid who grew up in Cedar Hill, a Dallas suburb, with his mother; his older sister, Monica; and his younger brother, Cameron. He was nine when their father left. He attended school with the children of Dallas Cowboys players and developed a habit of taking things personally. Over the summer, you'd find him running to and from practice in his B-team jersey.

"You couldn't outrun me. You wouldn't outlift me. I was determined [not to feel] less than," he says. "Then I transcended to where I am now: fuck everyone. Fuck everything. The coaches and the teachers were giving me the layout of what success looked like, and they said I wasn't that. So then I began to work hard to be that [...] I was dealing with my daddy issues and also moving into adulthood." Majors was constantly being kicked out of school for fights but later discovered reading and acting as a distraction from rebellion. His family gifted him a viewfinder his grandfather had brought back from his time in the military, along with books such as *The Three Musketeers* and *The Canterbury Tales*. In time, Majors sanded away at his edges but kept the chip.

When he read the *Devotion* script, he connected with a particularly agonising scene in which his character, Jesse, gives himself a pep talk during an insecure moment. "The doubt is overwhelming, and what he does to get himself in a position to succeed is heartbreaking and telling," Majors says. "I was pulling from things I knew would hurt me. Things I've said, to get myself where I need to be to tell Jesse's story."

Majors notes that part of the challenge with physical acting is quieting your body's natural reflexes. Sometimes he just can't let them go. "When you express that much discomfort, rage or loss, that is a physical reaction. Your body doesn't say 'Cut!' and you're over it," he explains. "You can't turn it off, because it's not acting." The opposite instinct is turning it on. In the middle of a brutal take or workout session, he asks himself, "Am I dying?" And when a voice inside screams, "No!" he pushes. "It could be *The Last Black Man In San Francisco*, and it's like, 'Go!', My emotions are a muscle. I say, 'Alright, fire them motherfuckers up!' You'll hear me hollering. I scream on set like a quarterback. 'Oh-maha! Oh-maha!' It's a thing." Stephen Broussard, an executive producer on *Loki* and a producer on *Ant-Man And The Wasp: Quantumania*, recalls how Majors had "an insane work ethic" and would show up early on set every day wearing his Kang outfit, then jog around the soundstage with his portable speaker.

Majors is known around Hollywood for his immersive approach, a blend of different method-acting styles. "I'm not going to be an acting snob here," he begins. "But I will say, when people talk about the method, they're referring specifically to Strasberg." He points out the differences between the improv-based Meisner and Demidov techniques, both of which he studied at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and the School of Drama at Yale. Method acting has earned a reputation as somewhere between excessive and grandiose, and Majors is mindful of his energy while filming but emphasises he'll do "whatever it takes for me, whatever it takes".

During production, Majors has sent his scene partners written letters and songs relevant to their roles. For *Devotion*, he took Christina Jackson, who plays his onscreen wife, Daisy Brown, on an old-fashioned ice-cream date to get in character. When shooting a take for the opening scene of *Magazine Dreams*, Majors was

He is equal parts focus and devotion, and he wears his drive like a second skin.

> **“I’m not fearless. I actually encounter fear a lot. But I know I can do it”**

lifting with such intensity, snot and tears running down his face, that director Elijah Bynum told him to “take it easy”. Majors chuckles at the memory. “He almost got his head bitten off.”

He adds, “I’m not trying to prove anything to anyone. I’m just trying to finish the mission. I’m never doing more than I need to. That’s economy. I’m usually relaxed.” Before accepting the role in *Devotion*, Majors asked his co-star Powell to meet him at a Russian bathhouse in Manhattan’s West Village, where they sat in a sauna and discussed the movie and their upbringing for around five hours. “As an actor, you have to be incredibly sensitive and be able to get in touch with things that a lot of other people maybe cover up,” says Powell. “To make it as an actor in Hollywood, you also have to be relentless, and that’s Jonathan. It’s like he’s got these two sides where he’s the greatest empath and also a warrior.”

Shaping Up

Majors will soon tackle the task of following up Josh Brolin’s Thanos with Kang, the anchor of the MCU’s multiverse saga. *Avengers: The Kang Dynasty* is due out in 2025. Majors says, “It was the character and dimensions of Kang [that drew him to the role]. And the potential it had. I thought, ‘I’ll take a chance on that.’” He first talked to Marvel head Kevin Feige only after filming *Loki* and sealing the deal to play Kang. “Jonathan is an incredibly compelling actor who puts in the work yet makes it look effortless, and he’s also just cool—everyone pays attention when he steps into the room,” says Feige.

Majors is prepared to give a rich, multi-dimensional performance unlike any other. “Killmonger, Thanos and Kang are not related, and that’s good for the MCU. It adds diversity,” he says. In 2021, he started layering on muscle for his portrayal of Kang in the newest *Ant-Man* film, working with strength and conditioning coach Jamie Sawyer. Sawyer used the same approach he uses when training boxers and MMA fighters, prioritising performance over aesthetics. “He is the warrior version of Kang, so there was a focus on what that warrior would look like, [someone] who’s been around through the ages and has developed every type of combat skill,” says Sawyer. “It was about making him look like an imposing figure.”

Audiences know that an actor’s physical transformation is part of the job, but they’re also aware of the temptation to overdo it, especially when playing a chiselled superhero. “I look at Kang and I go, ‘Okay, cool. It’s a certain IP where people expect this at a bare minimum,’” says Majors. “No one should put themselves or their families in a place where they’re hurting, but your own discomfort is not necessarily a bad thing. That’s growth. It’s not comfortable, but you’re here to save the world, aren’t you? Or take over the world.”

While filming *Ant-Man* in 2021, Majors also began readying for *Creed III* with his primary trainer, Mark “Rhino” Smith, and boxing coach Robert Sale. Rather than simply prepare him for the movie, Sale wanted Majors to inhabit the essence of a fighter and taught him how to box. At points, he had Majors spar with professional fighters (minus the hitting). The actor’s athletic IQ helps him understand the science of boxing. “The trick to becoming believable on film is to embody it philosophically,” says Sale. “He ate up every component of the information ideologically.”

Michael B Jordan, who plays the *Creed* franchise’s prizefighter Adonis, makes his directorial debut with the third installment. He knows the amount of mental prep required to sell the choreography of boxing. “Jonathan, you know, lives a little bit of the character, so there’s a fluidity from off set to on set that you respect,” says Jordan. “The time it takes to do these fights and what it takes out of you daily is truly incredible.”

Majors is taking nothing for granted. He wakes up at around 4am to run or train, and his 182cm build is low-single-digit body fat and striations that “cannot be bought”. Still, the past year of preparation has tested the limits of his mind and body. “I’ve always been athletic, but these are body roles—where the body is part of the given circumstances,” he says. “*Creed* taught me things about my craft, my body and the marriage of the two. There’s levels to this shit.”

Major League

The vibe in 800-acre Hampstead Heath, with its rolling hills and gentle shrubs, is serene. But Majors can’t help adding an even more tranquil backdrop. An hour into our conversation, he grabs his iPhone and raises the volume on a contemporary classical song: *Luminous,* by

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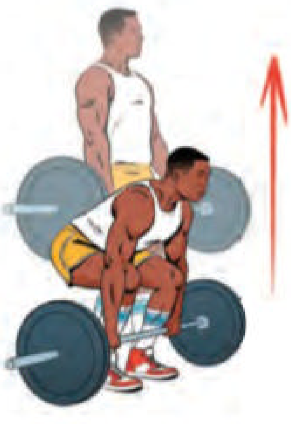
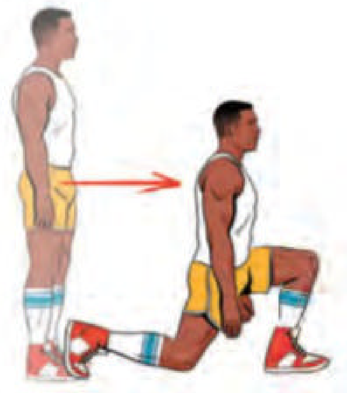
Major Muscle Gains

To get ripped for *Magazine Dreams*, Jonathan Majors spent 12 weeks working with trainer Mark “Rhino” Smith, relying on supersets. Do each of these supersets twice a week to build size

THE LEG-DAY CRUSHER
4 SETS

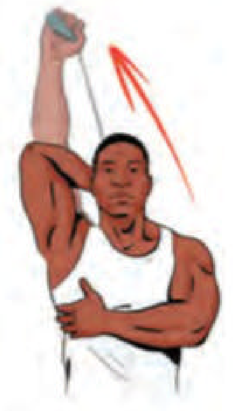


01 BARBELL DEADLIFT
Aim to move a heavy weight. Do 4 to 6 reps per set.

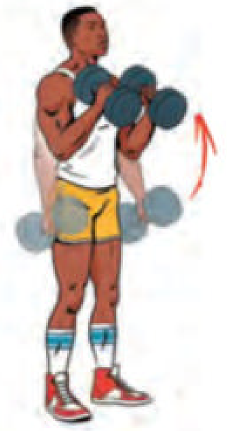


02 WALKING LUNGE
Now focus on volume. Do 50 total lunge reps (25 per leg).

ARM ANNIHILATION
3 SETS

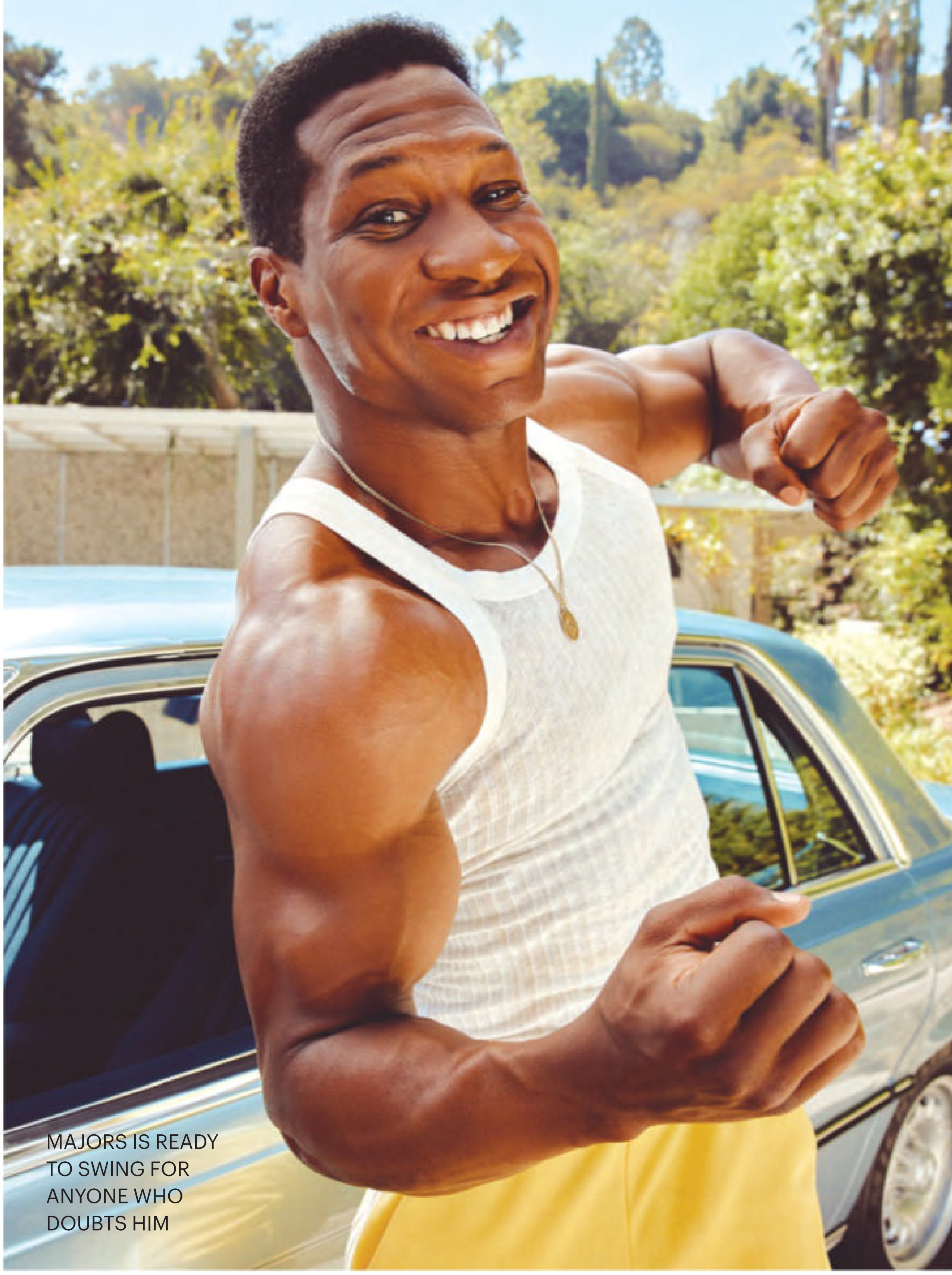


01 OVERHEAD EXTENSION
Move only at the elbow as you pull the cable. Do 15 reps per arm.



02 HAMMER CURL
Do 10 reps per arm. Make sure you don’t swing the weights.

ILLUSTRATIONS: BEN MOUNSEY-WOOD



MAJORS IS READY TO SWING FOR ANYONE WHO DOUBTS HIM

Italian pianist and composer Ludovico Einaudi. It turns out he was playing music the whole time, so low it was imperceptible. When I ask him later if music is part of his routine, he texts back, “Music is an integral part of my life. I play it often to keep some spirits away, but often to invite them. It stays with me and plays the yang to yin of silence, which I also yearn for very often.” His uncle was a jazz saxophonist, and his mother, a minister of music, told him music had spirits in it, so he shouldn’t listen before bed, which made Majors do the opposite.

A notebook peeks out of his pocket—he journaled a bit in the surrounding meadows on the way over. He tells me that he’s writing about his creative process, characters he’s played, loves, losses and memories. Later, we walk to the nearby Brew House Cafe, where he fills his plate with eggs, spinach and four strips of bacon. Those muscles of his need fuel.

Majors isn’t very social outside of work, and he isn’t on social media. He joined Facebook when he was 17 and deactivated his account not long after. “I had broken up with my girlfriend from Texas and I never really got back to it. I’ve always been an outcast.”

Early last year, Majors was in Los Angeles filming *Creed III* when a photo of him shirtless on set leaked online. Obscene tweets ensued. His publicist and his mum notified him of the photo. “Now I kind of step away from that part,” Majors says. “There’s nothing wrong with that. I embrace it. I also mostly wear hoodies when I’m out. I stay covered up.” He adds, “I think that’s part of being sexy. I’m not conscious of it. My brother was the pretty boy. I was never the cute boy growing up. I was just J.”

You won’t find J partying. He does walk his dogs and run a lot. While out with his two Belgian malinois, Captain and Hero, one day in Los Angeles, he met an amateur bodybuilder named Jason Best, who complimented the dogs and had just seen him in *The Harder They Fall*. From then on, Best would bring Majors coffee every day, and they’d sit on the corner with the dogs and chat about religion, relationships and fatherhood. (Majors has a nine-year-old daughter and won’t discuss his relationship status.) “Regular homie. That’s who I fuck with,” he says. “If you build castles, everyone that approaches you is an enemy. But if you’re among the people, everyone’s an ally. I’m actually with you.”

When asked where home is, Majors says, “I’ve been without a permanent physical address for six years now, without rent or mortgage and never in one place for longer than three to five months.” Four years ago, he called himself an actor for the first time and it didn’t feel right. The more he performs, the more he realises he’s still learning. He rarely celebrates, but he does find romance in his work. “It’s an occupation. It actually is what occupies my mind all the time, outside of my intimate relationships. I’m lucky in that way. I just really like it.” He laughs. “Some days it is a job. But that’s the athlete in me, where it’s like, ‘Okay, that’s another rep; it’s the last round.’ There’s something romantic about that. You get off work at 4.30 in the morning, drive home in Los Angeles, through Topanga Canyon, and no one’s on the road. I bring my dogs to work. So I got my dogs in the truck. I got my windows down. Got my *Radiohead* playing. I’m just gunning it. That’s the best, man.”

Majors cuts a commanding figure walking alone back to his residence near Kenwood. Once in a while, you’ll encounter someone like him with an intense, almost painful ambition that propels them to greatness. I tell him few people care enough to reach the level of focus he somehow sustains. “That’s true. That’s the secret weapon,” he says. “I have a tremendous amount of faith in my preparation and faith in something greater than me.” To him, control is preparation.

“I’m not fearless. I actually encounter fear a lot. I just don’t give a fuck. I know I can do it, and it’s something or someone else sneaking in and saying, ‘Be careful.’ Which is like the person telling me you’re on the B team. Telling me you’re not smart enough, or you’re not handsome enough or you’re not talented enough. And I go, ‘Oh, but I know I am,’” says Majors. “And not because my ego tells me I am but because I’m ready. I haven’t had a carb in two and a half months. I know I can take my shirt off. I’ve been running miles. And because I’ve failed. I’ve already had another grown man pull the weight off my chest because everything has died. I’ve already tried to jump on the horse and broke my heel. This is not going to be worse.”

PICKUP AND PLAY

RUGGED, DURABLE BUT STILL COMFORTABLE—THESE BAKKIES MEAN BUSINESS.

WORDS BY JULIET MCGUIRE

TOYOTA
HILUX GR

THE OG IS BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER

THERE'S NO DENYING that us South Africans are a unique bunch. Quirky—if you will. We have our idiosyncrasies that make for great fodder come gathering time with beers in hand and braais at full blaze. Another eccentricity? An intrinsic adoration for bakkies. Have you ever met a South African who wasn't a fan? Steer clear; in the motoring world they're mostly considered traitors—those who have shed their birth right in favour of hatchbacks or other pretenders. If you're among them, we're here to convert you back to the mission: this fleet opens the doors to all-new comfort, top performance and endless terrain to explore. Plus, they'll put you back on track when it comes to braai-side banter.

THE OGS

TOYOTA HILUX GR-SPORT

◀The Hilux is only South Africa's top selling bakkie. Some would call it the original gangsta (OG), and giving it even more street cred is this GR-Sport (GR-S) derivative. You might already be familiar with Toyota's naming convention, but this model sits just under the Legend RS models, and features some added styling elements, refined handling and a power boost.

Why should you be driving it?
Because as a nation we are image conscious when it comes to what we drive, and the GR-S will help with any insecurities you might have (not that you should have any!). This model makes a statement. The model-specific GR-S grille in high-gloss black, 17-inch alloys, GR logos and decals, as well as the Raider-designed bumpers, black side mirror caps, door handles and side steps, make for a bold and powerful look. The standard 2.8-litre, 4-cylinder turbodiesel engine has had a sneaky upgrade and instead of producing 150kW and 500Nm, the GR-S spits out 165kW and 550 Nm. It is mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission which translates to a smooth drive whether on- or off-road.

Can it go off-road?
Could we call it a Hilux bakkie if it couldn't? I doubt it. But the GR-S does come standard with 4X4 and so can handle just about anything you throw at it. Deflate the perfectly sized 17-inch tyres (for off- and on-road for a bakkie) and you could take on an off-road gymkhana. The extra torque will also go a long way when heading up some rocky inclines... or if you need to get yourself out of a muddy situation.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R891 400

ALL-WHEEL TRACTION MAKES LIGHT WORK OF ANY TERRAIN

FORD RANGER WILDTRAK 3.0 V6

▲It is the Toyota Hilux's Achille's Heel. The other half of this bakkie-loving nation. The Wildtrak, more specifically, is currently the most expensive Ranger in the line-up... pending the arrival of the Raptor which arrives a week after this goes to print.

Why should you be driving it?
Because not only is the new Ranger something to behold, but the Wildtrak is stellar in terms of looks and now in terms of performance. For the first time it is available with a 3.0-litre V6 turbodiesel coursing through its underpinnings. That's 185kW and 600Nm on tap. The perfectly mated 10-speed automatic 'box means that the entire driving experience is sublime. For those wanting to tow trailers or boats, this should be your potent playmate.

Can it go off-road?
As easily as it can handle on-road, so it can go off-road. Made even easier with the electronic shift on-the-fly 4WD system, selectable drive modes and significant departure and approach angles. The advanced 4X4 system with 4A means all-wheel traction is provided automatically, irrespective of the conditions which makes going off-road that much easier, and safer.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R953 500 (The 2.0L BiT Wildtrak 4X2 is priced from R867 700)

THE PIONEERS

JEEP GLADIATOR RUBICON

▼It has to be considered the coolest double-cab bakkie in South Africa. This all-American "truck" is currently the most expensive of its kind in SA. It's also the most in-your-face and if a bakkie could be considered arrogant, this would be it.

Why should you be driving it?
Because there is nothing else quite like it. Not only does it have a 3.6-litre V6 petrol engine under the bonnet, albeit with less-than-desirable outputs of just 209kW and 347Nm, it can transform itself like a, well, a transformer. The windscreen can be folded down, the doors taken off and the roof removed. Just picture it: cruising along the coast, surfboard in the back, blasting the *Beach Boys* (or something a little less clichéd). It's a Wrangler but not.

Can it go off-road?
Off-road is where the Gladiator really shines. It has an exhaustive list of systems that include multiple lock differentials, an off-road traction mode, part-time 4WD and permanent 4WD with low-range functionality. It also has BF Goodrich off-road tyres and a Fox suspension that makes traversing even the trickiest of obstacles pretty breezy. It also has impressive approach/breakover/departure angles, a ground clearance of 249mm and a wading depth of 800mm.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R1 329 900

THE SAFE BETS

PEUGEOT LANDTREK 4ACTION

▲ I bet you're thinking this is Peugeot's first attempt at a bakkie, right? Wrong. Would you believe that Peugeot's bakkie-building days go way back to 1938? Granted they were more of the workhorse kind, but what bakkie wasn't back then? This Landtrek is not even French, but rather Chinese-built as a collaboration between Peugeot and Changan Automobile.

Why should you be driving it?
Because it offers the competitive edge Chinese-built vehicles are currently exuding, as well as a French flair for good measure. It's bold and brash in design and stands out among a sea of similar broad-shouldered contenders. The 1.9-litre 4-cylinder turbodiesel, with its outputs of 110kW and 350Nm, might not excite you but it does fair better on the road than what it says on paper.

Can it go off-road?
Like some of its rivals, it too offers a shift-on-the-fly off-road dial which means you can switch to 4H (four-wheel drive) or 4L (low range) easily. The rear diff lock is also easily activated and the ground clearance of 235mm and wading depth of 600 mm, although not class leading, won't leave you stranded in the middle of nowhere. It is probably more comfortable on an uneven gravel road.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R689 900

VOLKSWAGEN AMAROK

▼ **What is it?**
It's the highly anticipated new Ford Rang... I mean Volkswagen Amarok. In case you weren't aware, the new Amarok is built on the Ford Ranger platform. It has the same engines as the Ranger and is locally produced at the Ford plant in Silverton. In other words, the new Amarok is technically, for all intents and purposes, a Ranger.

Why should you be driving it?
As much as it is a Ranger, it still looks like an Amarok. In terms of design, the only thing the Amarok shares with the Ranger is the roof rails, side mirrors and door handles. The interior, while like the Ranger, also has its own VW identity and this makes for a very nice place to be. And like the Ranger, you will also be able to opt for the 3.0 V6 turbodiesel engine. As soon as the Amarok launches locally, we will know what other engines are on offer... let's hold thumbs a Raptor rival also arrives.

Can it go off-road?
The Panamericana derivative is fitted with 18-inch all-terrain tyres (it would be better with 17-inch) and also features a rotary dial whereby you can select 4H or 4L on the fly. It is safe to say that the new Amarok will be as capable as the new Ranger off-road, which is a very positive thing.

And what will it cost?
Pricing TBC closer to the local launch

THIS RANGER IN DISGUISE PACKS SERIOUS POWER

TUNED FOR SA SOIL, THE NAVARA IS A TRUE LOCAL LEGEND

NISSAN NAVARA PRO 4X 4X4

▲ The Nissan Navara is in its third generation, but half-way through its lifespan, Nissan decided that it needed a complete overhaul and the result is thankfully far more positive than when this generation originally launched. It is also now built locally.

Why should you be driving it?
Yes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but regardless of that, the Navara has to be one of the best-looking bakkies on our roads. It also adds appeal with a comprehensive warranty and service plan, which is 6 years/150km and 6 years/90 000km respectively. And it could be considered to have one of the best rides when it comes to bakkies, on a myriad of surfaces.

Can it go off-road?
This new version was extensively tested on local soil and so has been tuned to fit South Africa's conditions. The suspension has been upgraded and a new engine put under the bonnet (a 2.5-litre turbodiesel instead of a 2.3-litre). It is a capable and well composed off-roader and because it has always been, it provides an air of confidence to customers.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R812 900

COMFORT THROUGHOUT: THIS ONE IS BUILT FOR THE LONG HAUL

THE OUT OF TOWNERS

GWM P-SERIES LT 4X4 AUTO

This Chinese-built double cab was a bit of a cat among the pigeons when it arrived back in 2020. That must be said about many Chinese-built cars these days. About five years ago, things started to take a turn and brands that had been disregarded before, were now bringing products to our shores that could no longer be ignored. The P-Series being one of them.

Why should you be driving it?
It offers the best value for money out of any double cab on the market. As much as its performance could be considered as only average, its practicality and features list is where it shines. A 360-degree camera, 9-inch infotainment system and host of safety features such as lane-departure warning and rear cross-traffic alert are just a few of the many standard features. It's got everything its far more expansive rivals offer but at a much more attractive price.

Can it go off-road?
It has all the systems equipped to go off-road such as the "Torque on Demand" all-wheel drive system with 4H Auto and 4L modes as well as Hill Descent Control and a rear-diff lock. The ground clearance is an impressive 232mm.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R640 950

MAHINDRA PIK-UP KAROO DUSK

It might be the most utilitarian of the double cabs on offer, but Mahindra has done well to up its game with a trio of special edition models for its Pik Up bakkie. It will be easy to see where the inspiration came from with them aptly being named the Karoo Dusk, Dawn and Storm models.

Why should you be driving it?
The Pik Up is one of the most affordable double cabs on the market and it's a no-mess, no-fuss kind of vehicle. Yet it still offers an SUV feel inside, which is on trend.

Can it go off-road?
Absolutely it can. It, too, boasts a 2H, 4H and 4L when required as well as a mechanical diff lock for when things get tricky. It is more workhorse than leisure, so that should give you an idea.

And what will it cost?
Priced from R624 999 ■

THERE'S ONLY ONE RIGHT WAY TO...

BUILD THE ULTIMATE RLT

1
COP QUALITY CUTS

Thin strips of packaged pork rashers are easily overpowered by the bread and tomato. Seek out sweet, smoky rashers that you can cut into 60mm slices. Many butchers carry the stuff, as does Woolworths; grind on some pepper to make the rashers stand out. 450g will make around 4 sandwiches.

2
SLOW-SIZZLE

Panfrying the rashers can make them brittle. Instead, place the slices on a high-rimmed sheet pan and slow-roast them in a 120°C oven for about 2 hours. The pork rasher's fat will render slowly, resulting in tender, meaty strips that are slightly chewy. Yes, it's worth it.

3
PREP THE INGREDIENTS

You want the pork rashers warm when they hit the sandwich, so organise everything else. Slice 1 large heirloom tomato the same thickness as the rashers, for balance. Then thinly slice ½ head iceberg. Cut 8 slices of sourdough, each 1.5cm thick, and toast them till golden brown. Finally, break out a mayo with a good balance of sweetness, acidity and umami.

4
ASSEMBLE!

The order: bread slice, rashers, tomato (sprinkled with salt and pepper), lettuce, bread slice (slathered with 1 Tbsp mayo). The theory: biting into the bread, you'll first taste the glory of the pork rasher, which acts as a base to prevent the lettuce from spilling and the tomato from slipping, and as the mayo melts from the warmth of the bread, it lightly dresses everything.

THREE WAYS TO MAKE A BLT EVEN AWESOMER

PISTACHIO BUTTER

Food-process ½ cup roasted pistachios and a li'l salt and sugar; drizzle in canola till smooth. Spread 1 Tbsp on bottom slice.

A GHERKIN

It is a palate cleanser. Flavour doesn't matter, as long as it's a spear (to get that crunch). Eat on the side.

AN IRON BREW

The sweetness plays off the saltiness of the pork rasher. American lager works well, too. Sip on the side.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURA MURRAY

B BRANDPUBLIC

Pork Koftas with apricot & ginger

A delicious option to mix up your midweek meals! They burst with flavour, and the Asian spice mix complements the pork superbly.

SCAN ME FOR THIS DELICIOUS RECIPE

SA PORK

www.sapork.co.za

PREP TIME 20 MINUTES COOKING TIME 20 MINUTES

THE HEALTH SNOB'S GUIDE TO

MUSHROOMS

SEASONAL PRODUCE IS THE SIMPLEST WAY TO HARVEST NATURAL FLAVOUR AND NUTRITIONAL SUBSTANCE FROM ANY DISH. THIS MONTH, IT'S TIME TO POP A CAP IN YOUR EATING PLAN.

01

'SHROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Nearly 70% of the mushrooms we buy in supermarkets are white buttons. But it's peak fungi foraging season right now, so branch out with the help of chef Morris Wegrodzki, who specialises in making veg the main event. The mushroom's meaty texture and mineral payload make any variety a star ingredient, whether you're vegan, veggie or just, er, hungry. Add magic to your meal with Wegrodzki's top picks.

A CREMINI

This humble ingredient is your ally in the fight against one of man's biggest killers: heart disease. Filled with the antioxidant ergothioneine, a serving will help to reduce your risk of cardiovascular problems.

B OYSTER

A mild-tasting option that boasts more iron than most other varieties, this mushroom will improve blood supply to your muscles to support your gym performance. It pairs especially well with crisp white wine, too.

C SHIITAKE

The shiitake's tender cap has a woody taste that complements Asian flavours. With more than double the satiating fibre content of white buttons, consider this a tastier weight loss supplement.

D MAITAKE

Save this one for the morning after the night before. Fry up a handful and serve with a slice of buttery toast—their naturally high levels of the antioxidant glutathione will help to bolster liver function.

OPINEL
INOX
OPINEL
SAVOIE FRANCE

02

FINDERS EATERS

When foraging, be sure to treat the ingredients delicately to protect their flavour and avoid breaking down their nutrients. "Don't rip—cut them," advises Wegrodzki. The best tool to use is a mushroom knife-and-brush combo (*R415, culinarykraft.co.za*). Then, place your haul in a wide, shallow trug (*R199, makro.co.za*). "This lets your mushrooms spread out and prevents them from squashing." Don't wash them, either ("they'll go slimy")—that's what the brush on your knife is for. Once in the kitchen, place a large non-stick pan over a medium heat and add one handful of mushrooms at a time. Be careful not to crowd the pan; cooking too many at once may cause them to steam in their juices rather than sauté. Patience is key—stir occasionally and remove only when your fungi are no longer producing moisture. Field to table? You've got it licked.

03

CAP IT ALL OFF

As the number of vegans in SA continues to grow—and with research suggesting that a flexitarian diet can improve both weight loss and heart health—Wegrodzki has devised four meatless recipes that each afford the honest mushroom the nutritional hero status it so richly deserves.

SEASON'S EATINGS

With autumn now covered, swot up on ingredients to maximise your year-round health.

CAULIFLOWER

Winter
At 92% water, this versatile vegetable is low in calories but high in vitamins. A rich source of fibre, it [redacted] digestion and helps to promote feelings of fullness.

LOBSTER

Spring
Welcome new research demonstrates that trehalose—a natural sugar found in this luxe crustacean—blocks glucose from entering and harming your liver cells.

STRAWBERRIES

Summer
They boast lots of heart-healthy antioxidants, such as ellagic acid, and flavonoids anthocyanin, catechin, quercetin and kaempferol. Plus, they also help to lower your cholesterol levels.

WORDS: TED LANE | PHOTOGRAPHY: LOUISA PARRY | ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

A

SIMPLE CREMINI ROTOLO

SERVES 4

- 2 ONIONS, DICED
- 3 GARLIC CLOVES
- 300G BUTTON MUSHROOMS
- 1L VEGETABLE STOCK
- 4 WHITE POTATOES
- 2 TBSP VEGAN CREAM
- 2 TSP SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1KG CREMINI MUSHROOMS
- 500G LONG-STEM BROCCOLI

METHOD

In a pan, sweat 1 onion and a minced garlic clove, then add the button mushrooms. Pour in the stock and season with salt before setting aside. Thinly slice the potatoes and combine them with the cream and paprika; layer on a baking tray and cook at 180°C for 30 mins. For the filling, fry up the creminis and remaining onion and garlic; spread on top of the cooked potato sheet. Roll it up, slice and serve with the sauce and steamed broccoli.

B

OYSTER MUSHROOM TORTILLA

SERVES 4

- 2 RED ONIONS, SLICED
- 3 MIXED-COLOUR BELL PEPPERS, SLICED
- 2 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- 1KG OYSTER MUSHROOMS, TORN
- 2 TSP SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1 TBSP SOY SAUCE
- 4 TORTILLAS
- 200G GUACAMOLE
- 200G SALSA

METHOD

In a frying pan, sauté the onions, peppers, garlic and mushrooms until the mushrooms are soft. Sprinkle over the paprika and add the soy sauce, then allow it all to cook for an additional 2 mins. To build your tortilla, load it with a generous serving of the mushroom and pepper mix and a dollop of guacamole and salsa, before wrapping it up and stuffing it in your mouth. This could get messy.

C

SHIITAKE, GREENS AND STICKY RICE

SERVES 4

- 100ML MIRIN
- 200ML RICE VINEGAR
- 40G SUGAR
- 500G SUSHI RICE
- 2 RED ONIONS, DICED
- 1 RED CHILLI, CHOPPED
- 1KG SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS
- 200ML TERIYAKI SAUCE
- 200G CASHEWS
- 500G PAK CHOI, CHOPPED

METHOD

In a small pot, boil up the mirin, vinegar and sugar and set aside. Combine the rice and 550ml water, simmer until the water has gone, then season with the syrup. As it cools, fry up the onions and chilli, then add the de-stemmed shiitake caps and cook until tender. Pour in the teriyaki sauce and cook for another 5 mins before crushing the cashews and adding them with the pak choi; stir for another 2 mins. Serve with the sticky rice.

D

LIGHTLY SPICED MAITAKE ON TOAST

SERVES 4

- 1 SHALLOT, SLICED
- 1 TBSP OLIVE OIL
- 500G MAITAKE MUSHROOMS, SLICED
- PINCH OF SMOKED PAPRIKA
- 1 TBSP SHERRY VINEGAR
- 4 SLICES OF SOURDOUGH, TOASTED
- 1 TBSP CAPERS
- 1 TBSP CHOPPED PARSLEY

METHOD

In a pan on a medium heat, fry the shallot in a splash of oil. Once it has softened, throw in your mushrooms along with a pinch of paprika. Allow the majority of the water to evaporate before pouring in the sherry vinegar to deglaze. Then, toast your sourdough slices and serve your mushrooms on top. Finish with a sprinkle of salty capers and parsley—and devour the lot while it's still warm.

LAMB OF THE GODS!

30
10

LAMB IS A HEAVY HITTER: THE MEAT DELIVERS MORE THAN 30 GRAMS OF MUSCLE-BUILDING PROTEIN, AND TWO SIDES LEND 10 GRAMS OF GUT-FILLING FIBRE. BOTTOMLINE: YOU NEED LAMB, AND WE HAVE THE RECIPES.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX LAU

▶ **THE EXPERT: ANDREW CARMELLINI** is the chef and owner of numerous restaurants, including **CARNE MARE**, **THE DUTCH** and **LOCANDA VERDE**. He contributed this issue's 30/10 recipes.

30G THE PROTEIN

A 170g serving of roasted leg of lamb provides about 40 grams of protein for 392 calories. It's also an excellent source of blood-boosting vitamin B12 and immunity-aiding zinc.

BUY IT Leg of lamb can come bone-in, which won't braai well. Ask the butcher to debone the leg and butterfly the cut. They'll slice it in half about three quarters of the way through, so it opens like a book and cooks in half the time.

COOK IT

Marinated Leg of Lamb with Garlic, Yoghurt and Fennel

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1	KG BONELESS LEG OF LAMB, BUTTERFLIED
1	CUP GREEK YOGHURT
2	GARLIC CLOVES, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
1½	TBSP WHOLE FENNEL SEEDS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
¼	TSP CRUSHED RED-PEPPER FLAKES
1	TSP HARISSA
1	TBSP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
1	TSP FRESH THYME LEAVES

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Using the tip of a sharp knife, score the lamb fat every 2.5cm on a diagonal. Repeat in the opposite direction to create a diamond pattern.
2. In a large bowl, mix the yoghurt, garlic, fennel, red-pepper flakes, 1 Tbsp freshly ground black pepper and harissa. Add the lamb and massage the mix into the meat. Marinate in the fridge for up to 24 hours.
3. Preheat your grill to high, indirect heat. Season the lamb all over with 2 tsp salt and allow it to come to room temperature.
4. Place the lamb fat side down on the braai. Sear, about 2 minutes; turn 45 degrees. After 2 more minutes, flip and repeat. Move the lamb to indirect heat, close the lid, and cook till a meat thermometer stuck into the thickest part hits 63°C, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the lamb and let it rest 10 minutes.
5. Move the meat to a cutting board and slice thin on a diagonal.
6. In a small bowl, combine the juice from the plate with the balsamic and thyme. Pour over the sliced lamb, sprinkle with sea salt and serve. *Feeds 4*

Nutrition per serving: 401 calories, 36g protein, 5g carbs (1g fibre), 25g fat

▶ Want more tasty meals in your life? You're covered with loads of them at **mh.co.za**

30G
10G

HANG ON. WHAT'S 30/10?

Experts agree that eating 30 grams of protein helps build muscle and 10 grams of fibre fills you up at mealtime.

10G THE FIBRE

Serve both of these sides with the lamb to hit your goal of 10 stomach-filling grams of fibre.

RED CABBAGE COLESLAW

In a bowl of hot water, add ***¾ cup dried cranberries.*** In a large bowl, place **1 red cabbage,** sliced. In a pot, boil ***2 cups red wine*** and ***1 Tbsp maple syrup*** till syrupy, 15 to 20 minutes. Pour into a bowl and mix in ***2 Tbsp red-wine vinegar, 2 tsp grainy mustard, 2 Tbsp olive oil, 2 Tbsp canola oil, ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp pepper*** and ***¼ tsp ground caraway seeds.*** Pour this over the cabbage; toss. Add the berries; ***1 cup walnuts,*** chopped; ***¼ cup parsley,*** chopped and ***2 Tbsp celery leaves,*** chopped. *Feeds 4*

ASPARAGUS WITH CITRUS AND OREGANO

In a microwave-safe dish with high sides, add ***450g asparagus,*** woody ends trimmed; ***2 Tbsp olive oil*** and ***200ml water.*** Top with the ***zest from 1 orange,*** cover the dish, and microwave on high, 2 minutes. Rotate and cook until bright green, about 2 minutes. Allow to cool; drain. In a large bowl, add the ***segments and juice from 2 oranges; 4 Tbsp olive oil; 2 scallions,*** finely chopped; ***1 tsp dried oregano*** and the ***juice from 1 lemon.*** Season and stir. Transfer the asparagus to a serving dish. Top with the orange mix; sprinkle with salt. *Feeds 4*

BARBELL
45 LBS
BARBELL
45 LBS

POWER UP YOUR PACKAGE!

The stronger-erection, better-sex, penis-optimisation training plan you need now.

BY JON IRWIN

"FITNESS ROUTINE" USUALLY conjures up whatever gets you more endurance or stronger muscles. But devoting a little time to a few routines and developing new habits can also result in a stronger, healthier penis. Think of it as Third Leg Day.

Peak-performing junk (penis, balls, prostate and pelvis—the whole enchilada) puts bathroom breaks under your control and houses sperm that are both plentiful and swift.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN FORBSE

FITNESS FS-1325
FITNESS FS-1325

Whether you think your package is working great, struggling, or doing something in between, these tips will help you get your gear in gear.

HOW TO OPTIMISE IF YOU ARE:

BASICALLY FINE

Everything is working okay—you just want to keep it that way.

RAISE THE FREQUENCY

▶ Men who had sex less than once a week had a higher risk of erectile dysfunction than guys who did it at least once a week, according to a study in *The American Journal of Medicine,* making it one of the most useful (and fun!) ways to keep your penis strong. Even better, DIY sex is good, too. If you've noticed that you have a hard time maintaining an erection or reaching orgasm without, say, watching certain videos on the Internet, then you might want to try an orgasm ban during sex, even for a day, says sex educator Lawrence A. Siegel. This shifts the focus away from the endpoint and toward pleasure in the moment.

FIND THE RIGHT STUFF FOR YOUR STUFF

▶ When jock itch is driving you nuts, bypass online advice to apply apple-cider vinegar, cocoa butter or Vicks VapoRub—they can leave you more uncomfortable without helping—and start with an OTC antifungal cream (like Terbane). Then avoid repeat infections: Put those boxer briefs on carefully at the gym and treat athlete's foot and sweaty shoes with an antifungal powder, says the founder of Skin Wellness Dermatology Dr. Corey L. Hartman.

WRAP IT

▶ Rates of the most reportable sexually transmitted infections have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, according to the CDC. At last estimate, one in five people in SA has an STI. If you're convinced condoms are still nothing but barriers to pleasure, you haven't checked out the market for a while. Durex Fetherlite condoms almost feel as if there's nothing there. Skyn condoms have a soft texture and are non-latex.

HOW TO OPTIMISE IF YOU ARE:

SORT OF FINE

You have problems getting or keeping it up—and maybe bladder leakage. Things may also look slightly... off?

ADD A DAILY WORKOUT

▶ Treat your pelvic floor like the muscles it's made of and do isometric contraction sets. These Kegels improve bladder control and "have been shown to allow men to control ejaculations and enhance orgasm," says Dr. Jamin Brahmbhatt, an assistant professor of urology at UCF College of Medicine. Tighten the muscles that stop your pee midstream for 3 seconds, relax them for 3, and repeat 10 times. Aim for 3 sets a day.

GET THAT CHECKED OUT

▶ Pimples? Bumps? Rashes? Go to a doctor to figure out what's going on. Yes, there are apps out there, but urogynecologist Elizabeth Kavaler says that using an app to detect an STI is "totally crazy." You can order an at-home STI test kit (*famka.co.za*), but if what you have isn't an STI, the kit can't tell you what the trouble actually is. Only a real live doctor can do that.

HOW TO OPTIMISE IF YOU ARE:

NOT FINE

You can't maintain an erection. And the urge to urinate is all the time.

BOLSTER YOUR BLADDER

▶ If "drip" describes your latest bathroom trip, you may have benign prostatic hyperplasia, a usually innocuous yet annoying enlarged prostate gland. The good news is that there are many treatments after diagnosis. Talk to your doctor about saw-palmetto extract, a supplement that can reduce urinary symptoms for some men, says Kavaler. Prescription drugs and minimally invasive surgeries can also help.

ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE

▶ Having a hard time staying hard? Maybe it's your attitude. Men with higher levels of suspicious jealousy concerning their mate tend to have higher levels of erectile dysfunction, according to research by Gavin Vance at Oakland University. One way to cut through the envy is with sensate-focus therapy, a technique that uses touch, like holding hands, to decrease anxiety and increase intimacy.

SEEK TREATMENT FOR ED

▶ If you've ruled out pills due to side effects or preexisting conditions, consider injectables. Sounds scary, but intracavernosal injections do the same thing as pills—increase blood flow—and people who use them consistently have high satisfaction rates, according to a 2019 study. Just stay skeptical of shock-wave therapy, says Kavaler. Using high-frequency ultrasound to irritate the penis lining as a way to help new cells grow and increase blood flow is being investigated, but its marketing may be stronger than the evidence—at least right now.

MY SOMEWHAT HORRIFYING (BUT NOT AT ALL REGRETTABLE) VASECTOMY EXPERIENCE

And what you can learn from the usually routine procedure that men are lining up for.

HERE IS WHAT I don't want to see when lying on a table with my pants down: a doctor, wielding sharp instruments, digging around in the numb valley of my groin, looking for something he can't find. I feel a dull pressure and hear a snip. I peek out beneath my eyelids at the frustrated doc; he exhales, shakes his head. Back into the fray he goes.

One week before my 41st birthday, I lay prone under harsh fluorescent lights for an hour and let a young doctor poke into my genitals. He was looking for something he described as "the size of a piece of spaghetti." Two pieces, actually: one vas deferens—the tube that supplies sperm to the urethra—for the left testicle and another for the right. My vasectomy was supposed to be over by now.[1] With every empty *snip*, I began to wonder if I wasn't supposed to be doing this. I'd opted for a local anaesthetic instead of a sedative. Big mistake: those meds help the important parts get all nice and droopy.[2] Apparently I was a bit tense, which made it hard for the doc to grab what he was looking for, and the excess cutting and poking causes the area to swell up, which makes it even harder to apprehend the offending party.

MH advisor Dr. Larry Lipshultz at Baylor College of Medicine, tells me my procedure was highly unusual. "Once you get the vas [deferens] in your clamp, it's minutes before you're done," he says. "Once you find it, doing the rest of it is—*snip, snip, snip*."

Perhaps the hardest thing to find is the courage to make that first appointment. Since the national right to have an abortion was overturned in the United States, urologists say they've seen men come out of the proverbial woodwork to do the deed.

Which makes me think men's previous collective indifference had as much to do with our own apathy—we knew if something unexpected happened, our partner could always take care of it—as with misconceptions about vasectomies. About those myths: will the big V hurt your sex life or change your ejaculation? No. The only difference will be a lack of sperm in your semen. That's it. In the days after, my balls went from looking like a chewed-up fig to a small, overripe avocado.[3] Now they're back to their wrinkled, pink selves. I did take a picture of the tool tray before I left. I realise it's almost the exact opposite of a dick pic: evidence of a penis rendered powerless. Strangely absent are the scissors, despite the symphony of snipping sounds I heard.

All I know is that my wife will soon be off the Pill, her body resuming its rhythms after decades of being held hostage by hormone pills, our sex life cleansed of the terror of unintended consequences.[4] If my experience can break the ice—which rested on my newly unproductive scrotum—then perhaps we men can take a more active part in the conversation about sex and reproduction. Even if it means never having Bolognese again. ***—J. I.***

---

[1] A vasectomy procedure takes, on average, 20 minutes.

[2] Every patient is different, says Lipshultz, but the American Urological Association recommends a local anaesthetic with or without oral sedation.

[3] Some swelling is normal, and recovery usually takes a day or two, during which you need to protect your testes from added strain, like lifting.

[4] A vasectomy is well over 99 percent effective after a month or two, the delay due to testes storing 20 or so loads of sperm.

I'MPOTENT

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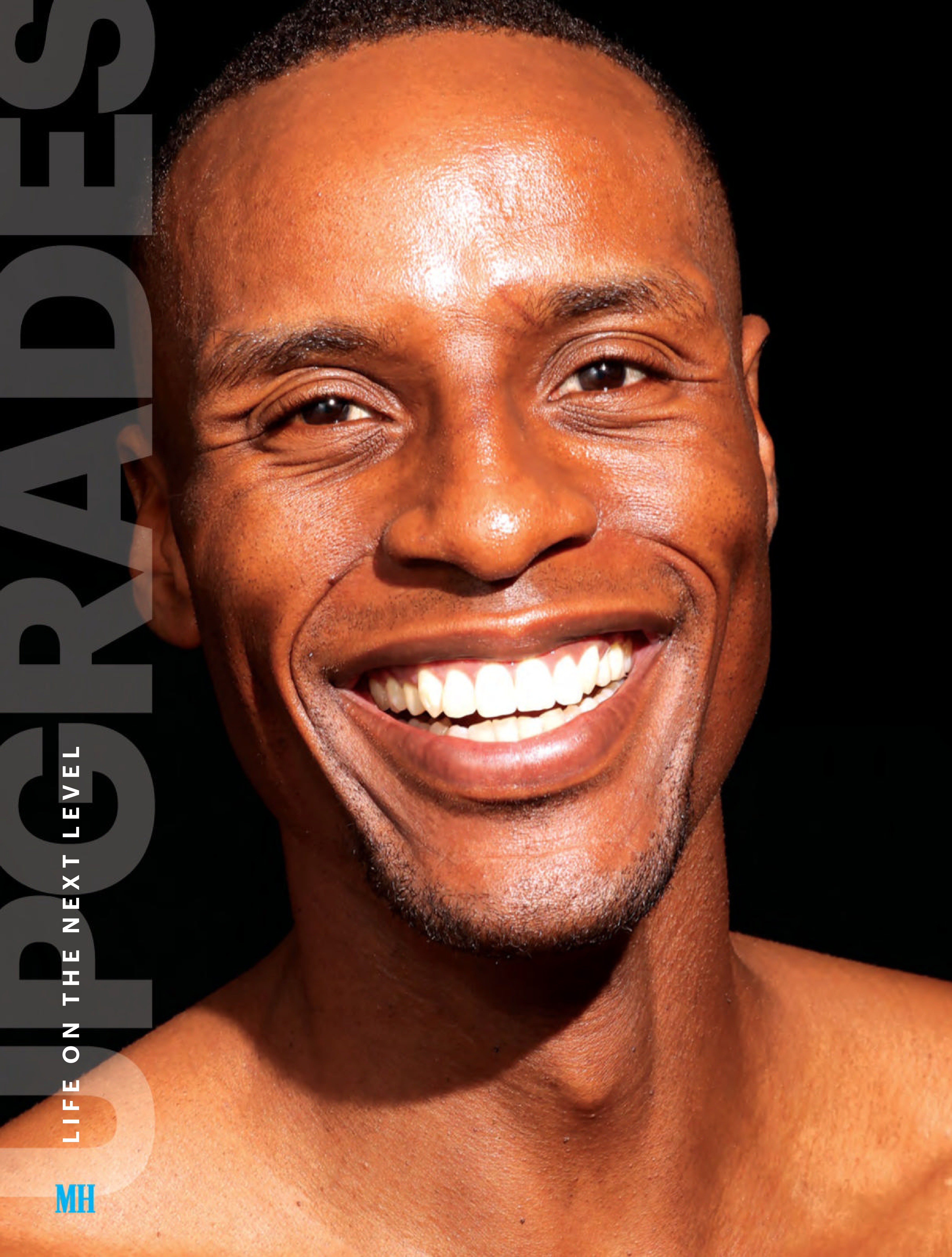
UPGRADES

LIFE ON THE NEXT LEVEL



MH

DENTAL WORK

GET YOUR TEETH BACK ON TRACK

STRESS-INDUCED GRINDING, YEARS OF COFFEE AND WINE, PLUS "FORGETTING" TO FLOSS ALL TAKE THEIR TOLL. LUCKILY, OUR BITE-SIZED GUIDE IS ALL WHITE.

SUNSTAR
G·U·M
SOFT-PICKS
+ fluoride

01

REBUILD A ROUTINE

Not done a spell in the chair since your early twenties? According to our UK mates, about half of adults who visited a NHS dentist in 2018 and 2019 hadn't popped by in the previous two years. Start by getting back into a routine, says dentist Dr. Michael Apa. Make an appointment every six months or so, brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. **Use:** G.U.M Regular SoftPicks (R99, Clicks)

02

PROTECT YOUR GUMS

Gingivitis, a common form of gum disease, is caused by plaque build-up and inflames the gums, says dentist Dr. Marc Lowenberg. Don't just brush the lower part of your teeth—ensure you're brushing along the gumline, too, where harmful plaque lurks. **Use:** Oral-B Genius X By Braun (R4 400, Clicks)

03

SLOW THE GRIND

Habitual grinding wears teeth down, which can lead to root canals. A dentist can fit you with a night guard, but "an over-the-counter guard is better than nothing", says Lowenberg. **Use:** GrindCure Guard (R699, takealot.com)

04

WHITEN UP

Your genetics determine much of the colour of your teeth, but a clean-up helps, says Lowenberg, who recommends a trip to the hygienist every six months. In-house teeth whitening is most effective, but home kits are good for top-ups. **Use:** Opalescence Go Home Whitening System (R2 230, takealot.com)

05

EMBRACE BRACES

Not ready to accept your imperfections? You may be tempted to go with invisible aligners, but you have to wear those for 22 hours a day, Apa points out. Lingual braces— brackets on the back of your teeth—are better for people who can't commit to aligners. Consult with a professional, who can then monitor your progress.

THE SECRET HOLLYWOOD TOOTH FAIRY (It's veneers.) These thin porcelain shells permanently attach to your teeth and are responsible for pretty much every A-list smile you see on screens—large and small. While veneers may create a perfect-looking smile, they're also restorative, says Apa. Veneers can "change collapsed bites, underbites and overbites", he says. They aren't cheap, though. According to OptiSmile, the average veneers cost between R4 400 and R15 000 per tooth, but they're the gold standard.

MAIN IMAGE: BYRON KEULEMANS | MODEL: DINO CIDADE/BOSS MODELS | WORDS: GARRETT MUNCE | PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN FORBES | ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

TOUGHER TIMES

INTREPID SORTS NEED A WATCH THAT CAN HANDLE WHATEVER THEY THROW AT IT, OR THEMSELVES AT. THAT'S WHY OUR TOP PICKS ARE BOTH HIGH-TECH AND HARD AS NAILS.

BY CHRIS HALL

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU THINKING? Taking a luxury watch on your next trip into the wild? Are you mad? Yes, we all know that Rolexes and Omegas and Tudors and Breitlings have been worn up Everest and into space and to the depths of the ocean floor. But that was when explorers wore tweed and Garmin didn't exist. And besides, who wants to spend thousands on a watch only to risk it getting scratched and scuffed? Well, the mechanical watch does still have a few cards in its hand when it comes to venturing into hostile environs. It won't fizzle in the desert or freeze on the steppes, and it won't run out of power, ever. Certainly, the role of the mechanical watch has changed since the days when it was a practical necessity for any explorer. But the irony is that today's watches are better equipped to face the elements, thanks to such modern advances as toughened steel, sapphire crystal and microscopic manufacturing tolerances.

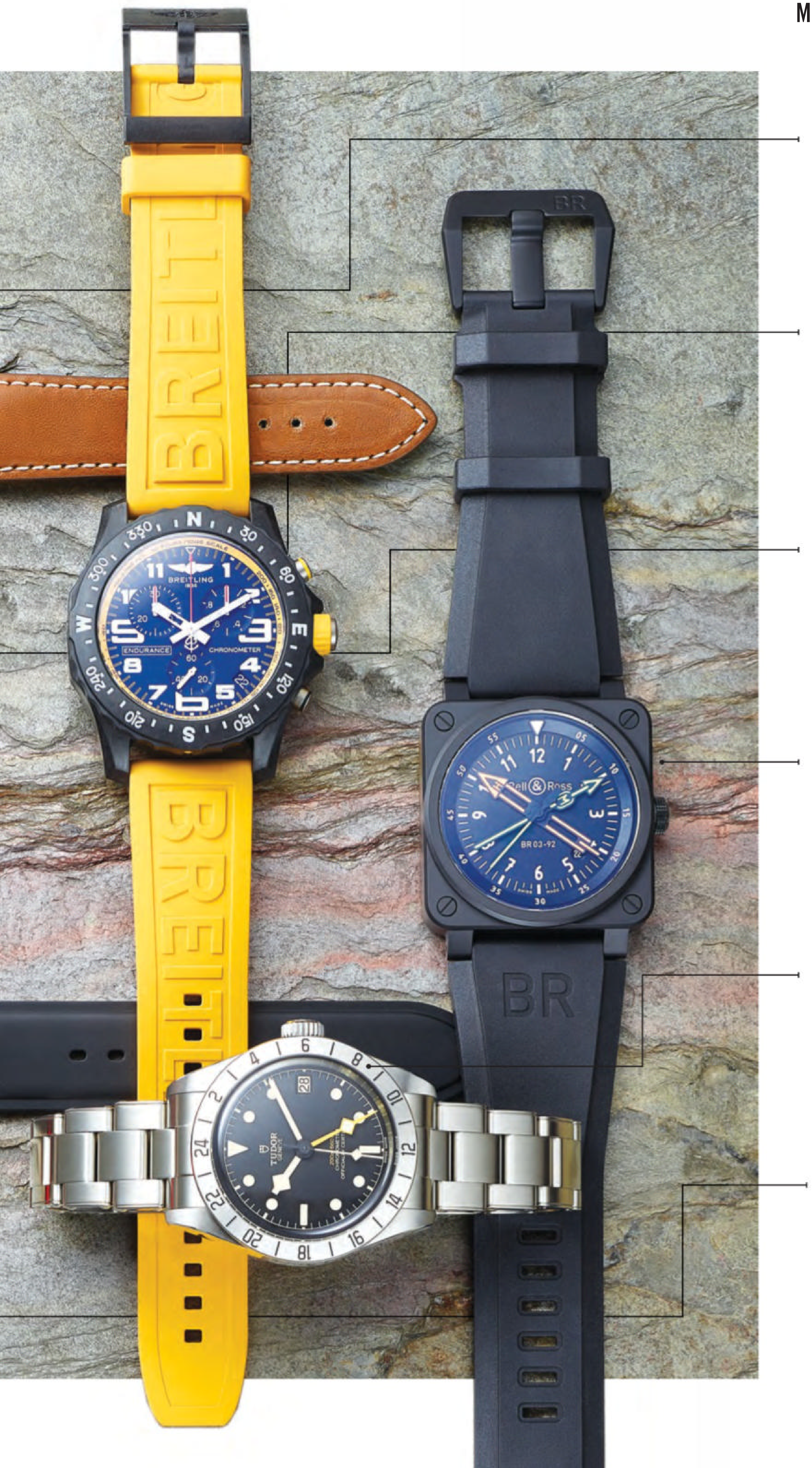
Our six dependable timepieces are all chosen because they can take a few knocks — though that's just the bare minimum for a proper adventure watch. In the case of Bremont's MBIII, unless your excursions are more vigorous than ejecting from a fighter jet, your timepiece will handle it. Calling something a "tool watch" isn't just marketing, either—many can still help you out of a tight spot. For instance, a GMT hand, like those of the Tudor, Bremont, Oris and Longines featured, can function as a rudimentary compass (hold it flat, point the hour hand at the sun and the 24-hour hand will point north).

Others have more specific uses. Oris's Rega, designed for helicopter rescue crews, has a bezel marked with a pulsometer scale for emergency medics. Breitling's Endurance Pro has the same information around the edge of its dial. Some just take design inspo from navigational tools, like Bell & Ross' Radiocompass, based on the cockpit dial pilots use to plot their bearing relative to a landmark. If nothing else it proves that, even if you're not the outdoors type, the best thing about these watches is that they still look the business.

LONGINES
ORIS
BREMONT
LIFT

SAVING FACE
For real heroic feats, Breitling's Emergency watch comes with its own SOS antenna. It can be located the world over.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN MCALISTER



01 Longines Spirit Zulu: R63 000, longines.com
We're talking Zulu as in Zulu-time, military-speak for Greenwich's zero-hour meridian. A new addition to Longines' Spirit range, it boasts a ceramic 24-hour bezel and 100m water resistance, as well as a three-day power reserve.

02 Breitling Endurance Pro: R67 800, breitling.com
No GMT hand here, but a compass bezel instead, so your navigational emergencies won't be a problem. The Endurance Pro is cased in "Breitlight", a proprietary scratch-proof compound, and runs on a high-end chronometer-rated Swiss quartz movement.

03 Oris Rega Fleet Limited Edition: R63 800, oris.ch
Oris is so committed to its airborne rescue watches that you can specify exactly which model of aircraft (there are 21 to choose from) and even the call-sign that you want engraved on the back. Fortunately, you don't actually have to be able to fly one.

04 Bell & Ross BR 03-92 Radiocompass: R75 000, bellross.com
Bell & Ross is renowned for its aeronautical-inspired timepieces and this new model from the Flight Instruments range is no exception. Of particular note are the quirky fluorescent hands mimicking the original radio-navigation tool.

05 Tudor Black Bay Pro: R72 100, tudorwatch.com
A back-to-basics version of Tudor's smash hit, which no one can deny looks a lot like a classic Rolex Explorer II thanks to the fixed steel bezel. Sharing a little DNA with one of the most famous adventure-ready watches of all time is no bad thing, though.

06 Bremont x Rapha MBIII: R107 000, bremont.com
Produced in partnership with Rapha and only available to members of the famous bike brand's cycling club, this is the coolest-looking MBIII for years. It's cased in grade five titanium for the best blend of strength and light weight.

THE WEALTH REPORT

BOOST YOUR PRODUCTIVITY, CUT YOUR HOURS AND CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT MONEY WITH OUR *MH*-APPROVED, EXPERT-BACKED ADVICE.

BY KIERAN LEGG

1 HAPPY RETURNS

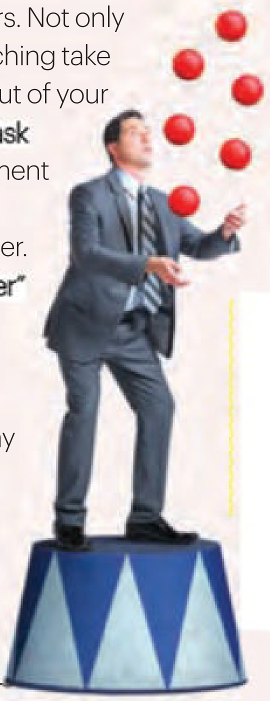
Turns out the pursuit of happiness can also stock your savings account, suggests new research. A study published in *Personality and Individual Differences* found that those who seek out a positive mental state (over adding zeros to their monthly earnings) tend to have a better approach to managing their finances. The team looked at a decade of research papers, analysing how participants' emotional states impacted their financial health. The result? Those who focused on cultivating good vibes—i.e., attempting to live a full, happy life—were more likely to save, budget accordingly and generate additional Randelas. Maybe swap that next stint of staring at the stock market with a walk in the park.

2 TICKING TIME BOMB

Despite the shifting fabric of the workspace—which for many of us has meant working from home—the eight-hour workday is a concept that continues to endure. However, new research from DeskTime shows that our dogged commitment to logging in at least eight grueling journeys around the clock every day could be hurting our productivity. The company found that employees working six hours still had the same productivity levels as those clocking in more. In fact, other research has shown that those who tap into a state of "deep work" can accomplish far more in just a few [redacted] minutes behind their desks.

3 TASKMASTER

Old-school thinking may have tricked you into thinking that multitasking represents the peak of productivity. However, a 2001 study found that people who switch between multiple different activities are drastically—and it's not even in doubt—less productive than their tunnel-visioned peers. Not only does the act of switching take some serious time out of your day, but each new task demands an adjustment period that will only slow you down further. The "pomodoro timer" approach can give you the best of both worlds, letting you slice up your workday into manageable 25-minute windows each dedicated to their own task.



4 SPIN CYCLE

A long-term plan for your financial health can help you weather the storm. But if this down-the-line, when-I-need-it plan isn't cutting it, there's a new way to think about how you can stock the coffers. Cyclical thinking encourages you to zoom in on your savings in the context of your monthly paycheck. Instead of looking into the future, you're tasked with figuring out how much you want to save right here, and right now. A study published in *Psychological Science* found those who adopted this new-fangled approach managed to—on average—save 78% more than so-called "linear" thinkers.

5 SMART INVESTMENTS

According to the 2022 *Old Mutual Savings and Investment Monitor*, men are far more likely to take significant risks with their investments than women. While this can —if you know what you're doing—lead to greater returns, it can also leave you staring at an empty account. But taking big (and unnecessary) risks is just one of the many ways we're shooting ourselves in the foot, says **Tiaan Herselman, Head of Advice at Old Mutual Wealth**. For lasting wealth, avoid these mistakes:

1/ Compounding Your Problems

Part of the perks of investing is dipping into the money-making magic of compound interest, i.e., when you start earning interest on your interest. But most of us disinvest too early, depriving us of those golden returns. Let your investments marinate for at least five years.

2/ Idle Hands

Cash savings accounts can never keep up with inflation. The result? You're losing money for every month your funds sit idle. Opt for a diversified fund with high equity exposure instead.

3/ Chasing the Clock

If you're putting off saving for retirement, you're losing out on the most important resource of them all: time, says Herselman. There is no timing the market, there is only doing it right now.

GETTY IMAGES

MH PARTNERSHIP

Beyond the Numbers

BY SIMPLIFYING FINANCIAL PLANNING, WE CAN BETTER EDUCATE CLIENTS AND IMPROVE RETIREMENT OUTCOMES FOR MOST SOUTH AFRICANS.

Financial planning may seem daunting, but any financial plan can actually be broken down into four numbers. The reason most people do not build generational wealth is due to the fact that they fail to plan for the future. wAnd can you blame them? Financial planning can be complex at the best of times. There are many different factors to consider when planning for your financial future such as different investment structures, tax implications, expense patterns, regulations, asset types—to mention but a few. Also, we have access to so much information and navigating the details can be quite overwhelming for most people. However, if one looks through the information overload, you can break down any financial plan into just four numbers (whether you have R100 or R100 million to invest).

The four key numbers include the amount of assets an investor has accumulated at that point in time; the lifestyle (or income) these assets need to provide; the return that can be expected to receive on these assets (often referred to as the "investment return"); and, ultimately, how long the assets (or investments) need to cater for this lifestyle.

You can think of each of these four numbers as "buttons" or "levers" in your financial plan. By pressing each of these "buttons", you can see the impact on your overall financial plan. The four numbers are unique for all of us as we are all different and have our own unique goals, dreams and aspirations. Let's look at the triggers for these four numbers:

1 ASSETS

Here we consider the different investment types, e.g., retirement funds versus more liquid investments such as tax-free investments, or direct share portfolios and their tax implications both pre- and post-retirement. We also look at choosing between guaranteed and market-linked investments and paying off debt instead of investing. Then there is also the question of investing locally or offshore and setting up different legal entities such as trusts.

2 LIFESTYLE

It's important to set aside capital for emergencies and also items such as holidays, vehicle purchases, offshore travel or maybe owning a second property or holiday home. The impact of inflation also needs to be considered by modelling different inflation patterns. Specific generational wealth goals such as saving for your kids and building a legacy are also important considerations.

3 RETURN

Here we look at how much risk to take and the impact of different asset classes such as equities versus shares. We also delve into the returns on non-investment assets such as properties or business assets. The impact of volatility (upward and downward market movements) over the short and long term is another important factor.

4 LONGEVITY

It's important to prioritise leaving a legacy against funding your lifestyle. We discuss what your family longevity looks like while planning for longer- or shorter-term funding to reach your financial goals. A good financial plan is one where you understand how the different variables impacting your four numbers work together and empowers you to make real-time decisions. It's about the impact the decisions you make today have on your financial future.

OLDMUTUAL

WEALTH

For more information, scan the QR code or speak to your financial adviser. Visit oldmutual.co.za/wealth or call 0860 60 60 60.

SLEEP REEEEEAL EASY

A GOOD NIGHT'S REST STARTS WITH YOUR BEDROOM. THESE NEW TOOLS ARE ENGINEERED TO HELP YOU WIND DOWN BETTER, FALL ASLEEP FASTER AND WAKE UP AWESOMER.

YOUR NEW HUMIDIFIER

HomeQuip Cool Mist Cylindrical Humidifier

Big, bulky humidifiers suck up floor space and are a pain to clean. This compact, no-frills humidifier keeps your bedroom moisturised overnight to ease your congestion, and it comes with mood-lighting colours. It's like a lava lamp but actually cool. ***R289, yuppiechef.com***

YOUR NEW PILLOW

Fit For Bed 100% Latex Pillow

Memory foam can feel like a brick. Down pillows flatten fast. Fit For Bed finds a balance with a 100% latex moulded pin core constructed design that offers support and comfort. Bonus: It's moisture wicking. ***R899, fit.co.za***

YOUR NEW SLEEP COACH

Fitbit Inspire 2 Fitness Tracker

Get sleep data like how long you sleep (and in which sleep stages), how often you wake up and receive and overall sleep score. Plus, a vibrating alarm will wake you up during the optimal sleep stage. ***R2 199, takealot.com***

YOUR NEW LAMP

Beurer WL 75 Wake Up Light

Find yourself waking up on the wrong side of the bed? This wakeup light simulates a natural sunrise and has 6 different wake up melodies. Bonus: the four sleep melodies that will lull you to sleep. ***R3 249, clicks.co.za***

YOUR NEW COVER

Pure Mulberry Silk Duvet Cover

This cover is lightweight and can help maintain body temp throughout the night (credit silk being a natural thermal regulator), which means no more midnight kick-the-covers-off battles. ***From R5 198, lovelylinen.co.za***

MATCH! THE! SLEEP! DRINK!

Can you connect the beverage to its sleep benefit?

PERK	Improves sleep duration	Is just tasty	Increases muscle growth overnight	Improves sleep quality
DRINK	Casein	Tart cherry juice	Chamomile tea	Warm milk

KEY: Casein = Increases Muscle Growth Overnight; Cherry Juice = Improves Sleep Duration; Tea = Improves Sleep Quality; Milk = Is Just Tasty

WORDS: CHRISTIAN GOLLAYAN & KELLEIGH KOREVAAR | PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF BRANDS; GETTY IMAGES

MH GAMECHANGER

BECOME A WRAP STAR

OAKLEY'S SINGLE-LENS SUNNIES ARE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE FASTEST. CAST SHADE ON THE COMPETITION.

GOOD SHADES probably won't increase your uphill power output, but being suited up like you're riding into battle can't hurt—and these face-hugging Oakley Kato glasses will kick protection up a gear. Worn by Tour de France winner Chris Froome, the high-wrap frame and one-piece lens gives you a wide field of vision that helps you see more road. The nose piece also riffs on drag-reducing time-trial helmet designs.

The Kato's High-Definition Optics tech focuses light on one spot, creating a single image so your brain and eyes don't have to work so hard. The lenses are coated with a repellent that handles sweat, water and fingerprints, too.

Here's why the Kato puts your regular specs in the shade.

OAKLEY
KATO R3 930
FREEWHEEL.CO.ZA

v_

2.5x

The Kato's frames are more than twice as strong and 25% lighter than normal frames. They're also heat and cold resistant for added flexibility and improved impact resistance, even in icy, whipping winds.

iv_

120cm

The height from which you can drop a 16g steel ball onto the Kato's lenses without them cracking. That's the test they passed for their ANSI Z80.3 impact-resistance rating.

i_

15 years

It took years to develop Oakley's Prizm lens. The Kato's options allow light transmission between 11-35%, with tints that enhance colours and contrast to help you spot (and swerve) potholes.

ii_

30g

According to the Oakley Vision Performance Lab, this is the most comfortable weight for your face.

iii_

200+

The number of prototypes that Oakley's R&D team got through to nail down all of the key design features.

iv_

100%

The percentage of eyesight-damaging UVA and UVB rays (up to 400nm) that is blocked by the Kato's high-grade polycarbonate lens.

WORDS: KIERAN ALGER I PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN FEE

THE BEST GEAR TO ARRIVE AT *MH* HQ THIS MONTH

THE EDIT

BY *MH* STAFF

TOMMY HILFIGER MEN'S WATCH

The product of vintage inspiration, this new-wave timepiece is a step into all-purpose sporting territory for the iconic brand. This one features a geometric layered case and matte sunray dial; but the full range serves up a variety of different styles, letting you choose from sleek to sophisticated and everything in between. *R4 299 at Edgars and Truworths*

GEL-NIMBUS
PureGEL
FF BLAST+

ASICS GEL-NIMBUS 25

With a shift to a purely running-focused stable of footwear, the new GEL-NIMBUS pair can be seen as somewhat of a flagship footfall for ASICS. Leveraging the meaty shock absorption of their trademark GEL tech, these shoes will shield you from impact that might otherwise put a premature end to your laps. We're big fans of the breathable mesh upper, which provides ventilation without sacrificing on comfort. This is a neutral trainer, so it should work for most types of runners. *R3 499, Sportsmans Warehouse*

MARSHALL EMBERTON II SPEAKER

While most Bluetooth speakers prioritise function over form, the Emberton compromises on neither. Channeling the look of a vintage guitar amp, this portable party starter is capable of pumping out crisp sound at loud—and we mean very loud—volumes. Bonus: a single charge will net you 30 hours of play time. *R3 699, takealot.com*

PATAGONIA BLACK HOLE DUFFEL

Now that travel plans are back on the menu (and not just a sarcastic joke shared over pineapple beers), you need luggage that's up for the long haul. Aptly named the "Black Hole", this 55-litre workhorse will make light work of whatever you throw at it. Patagonia is also known for making extremely durable and weather-resistant gear, and this duffel doesn't disappoint. Removable shoulder straps make this an easy carry, and every inch of its perfectly stitched insides and outsides are spun from recycled fabrics. *R2 895, xplorerflyfishing.co.za*

UA MAGNETICO PREMIER 2.0 SOCCER CLEATS

Last year's World Cup has probably reignited your footballing ambitions. Take to the field in a pair of kicks that will help you stay glued to the pitch and—hopefully—curling in freekicks like the best. Thanks to Under Armour's CLONE tech, these can be customised to fit any foot size. We're also big fans of the "charged" cushioning that absorbs impact to save you bruised toes. *R2 999, underarmour.co.za*

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

At the **Animal Anti-Cruelty League Cape Town** (AACL CT), we are committed to the ongoing protection and care of animals in the Western Cape. We provide shelter for abandoned animals, run adoption centres to find the best homes for our animals, operate welfare hospitals and mobile clinics in disadvantaged areas, and reach thousands of primary school learners through our educational programmes—to name but some of our services. AACL CT does not receive any funding from the local or national government and relies solely on the generosity of donors and sponsors to keep servicing our communities and caring for their animals.

AACL CT helps 50 000+ animals per year.

While we offer treatment to pets at a subsidised cost, many owners simply cannot afford to pay for treatment. AACL CT will, however, never turn away an animal in need. And the only way we can continue to do that, is with the help and generosity of our supporters.

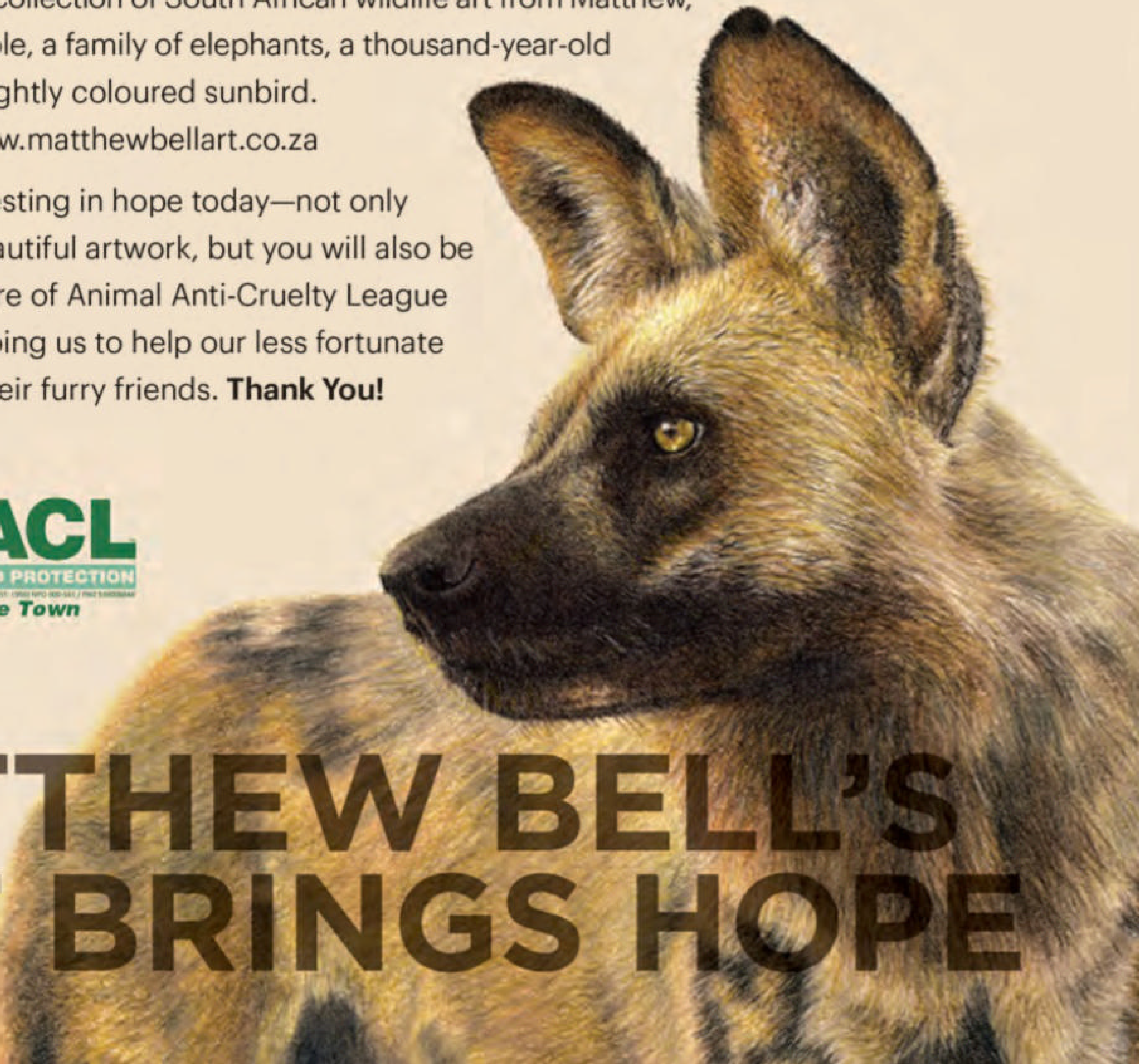
Animal Anti-Cruelty League Cape Town have partnered with world renowned **wildlife artist, Matthew Bell,** to encourage regular large donations. Matthew has kindly agreed to send a copy of his art to everyone who donate just R2 500, or more to AACL CT.

Simply visit www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/animalanticrueltyleague

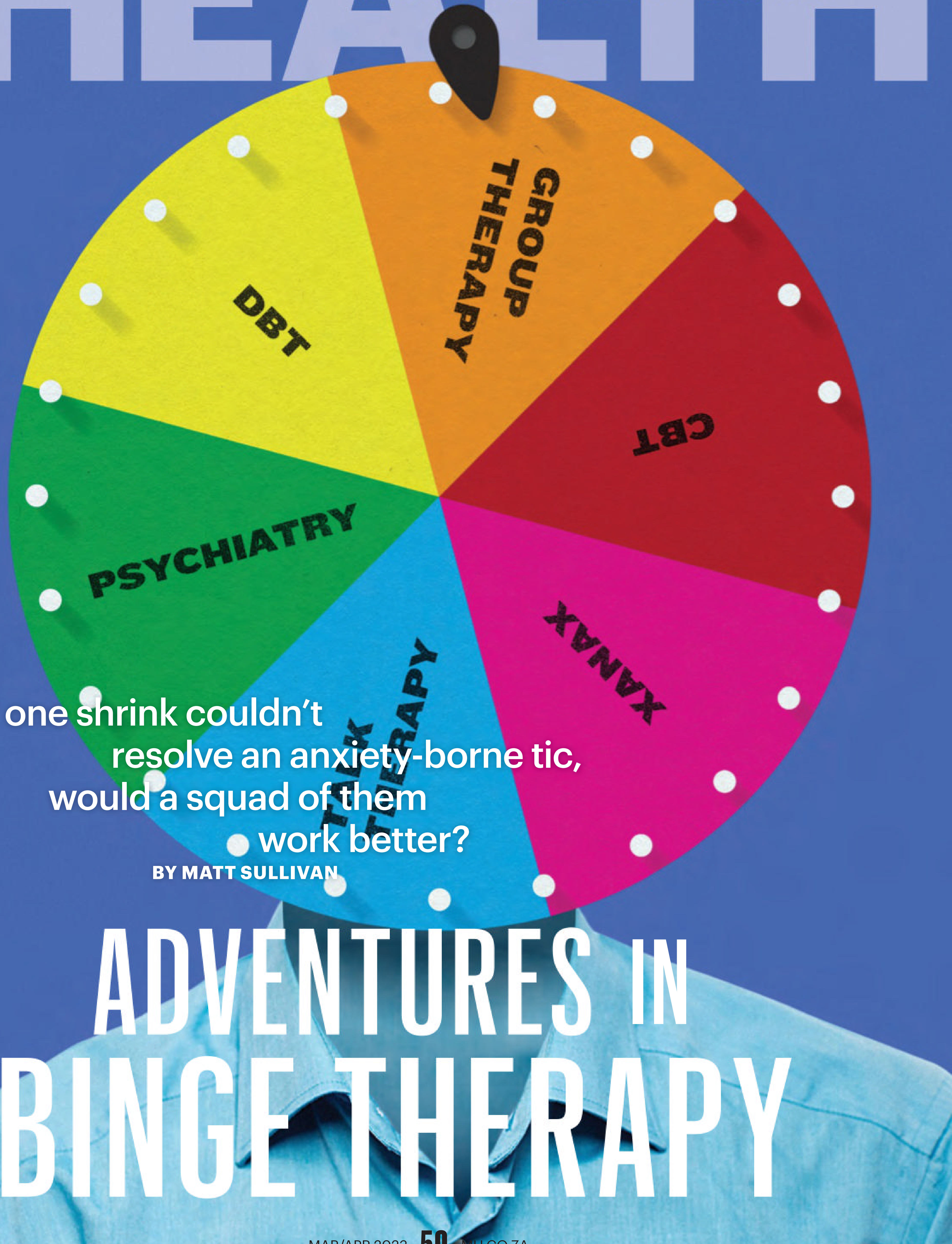
Why not build your own artwork collection and donate R2 500 or more every month
—you can own a full collection of South African wildlife art from Matthew,
depicting, for example, a family of elephants, a thousand-year-old
baobab tree or a brightly coloured sunbird.
Visit his website www.matthewbellart.co.za

Please consider investing in hope today—not only will you invest in beautiful artwork, but you will also be investing in the future of Animal Anti-Cruelty League Cape Town and helping us to help our less fortunate communities and their furry friends. **Thank You!**

ANIMAL ANTI-CRUELTY LEAGUE
AACL
CARE AND PROTECTION
Cape Town



MATTHEW BELL'S ART BRINGS HOPE


GROUP THERAPY
CBT
XANAX
TALK THERAPY
PSYCHIATRY
DBT

ADVENTURES IN BINGE THERAPY

If one shrink couldn't resolve an anxiety-borne tic, would a squad of them work better?

BY MATT SULLIVAN

AT SOME POINT AFTER, I dunno, maybe the 12th time that the pandemic did not in fact "end," my Hot Vax Summer got so compounded by stress—another kid on the way, dad in the hospital, cross-country move—that I felt almost blind. A tic, which began with occasional blinking, had devolved into a full-on facial contortion, all squinting and snorting and—ahem!—a socially awkward clearing of the throat. Strangers asked if I was okay, then shuddered. I wore sunglasses in the shade.

The eye doctor deferred to Therapist No. 1, also known as my judgmental analyst and her weekly hour of couch-bound guilt, but rambling about my mother was no cure for a case of the blinks. For a second opinion, I turned to my second mental-health regular—aka Therapist No. 2, aka my psychiatrist, aka the overpriced drug dealer for my anxiety medication—then asked her to refer me to a third opinion. And a fourth. And a fifth. If you could expect a menu for your mouth, I figured, why not a buffet for your brain? Why order the usual when you could try it all and choose a new favourite?

My shrink suggested three additional options: a solo specialist in a different, more interactive brand of therapy; a self-help group; and a textbook featuring 422 pages of mental-health workouts. Indeed, I was assured that any one of these referrals could function more like a new personal trainer offering exercises in cognitive jujitsu—no meds required, no couches allowed. Determined to outsmart the tic at any cost, I signed up for all of the above. These new modalities might take at least a month or two to rewire my worst instincts, but then, as Therapist No. 3 soon promised, "You become your own therapist."

THERAPIST NO. 3:
THE RADICAL

Dr. Stefanie Sugar struck me as more of a teacher, really, than a judge. At our initial appointment, the founder of New York City's Behavioural Psych Studio navigated me through the school of problem-solving known as dialectical behavioural therapy. DBT was first developed in the 1970s by the revered psychologist Dr. Marsha Linehan for patients with urges toward self-harm and borderline personality disorder who'd sat on the couch for years, invalidated and in danger. "The problem," Linehan once said, "is talking—being listened to and understood—doesn't necessarily make anything change." Her method was not to diagnose madness but rather to engage a commitment, then to build a lifelong tool kit that could be tailored for the shrink averse.

DBT has since expanded into an entire university of mindfulness to address everyday stressors including sleepless nights and partner conflicts. Linehan always sort of cribbed from Buddhism, Sugar told me, and the most relevant of today's behavioural-therapy brain hacks is a decidedly Zen approach: "radical acceptance."

In the face of crises as sprawling as Covid or as personal as a tic, our natural instinct is denial, especially and obviously when it comes

ILLUSTRATION BY EDMON DE HARO

momentum multiply

21:45

21:40
Still up?

21:42
Nope, already in bed😴

You?

12:43
This season is 🔥🔥🔥 just one more episode.

21:45pm
You need your beauty sleep, friend!

Sleep your way to better health.
Be well-rested.
Be rewarded.
There's a REWARD for EVERY BODY!

Join Multiply today and get rewarded from day one!

Speak to your financial adviser or visit **multiply.co.za**

Terms and conditions apply.

to bad habits like drinking and gambling. But let's say you're a tennis fanatic and you've started to feel a pinch in your back lately—a bad pinch that docs haven't been able to resolve. What if, instead of presuming you'd never pick up a racket again, you admitted to having that pain in bed each morning and decided not to let it bother you? What if I stopped worrying about snorting like a pig and learned to love the tic? "Radical acceptance sounds really kind of simple," Sugar said, "but it's incredibly difficult to practice, because we don't want to do it—the radical is in there because it takes all of you."

At the end of our next session, Sugar gave me my first homework assignment since university: a stress diary, which was more like an Apple Notes file to log all the places where I flared my nostrils, coughed unnecessarily or blinked too hard—walking dog, pushing stroller, taking a leak. But the act of documenting my habits revealed their hiding place. We can be at our most stressed-out during moments of alleged calm, when our anxiety floats toward catastrophe and our emotions give way to an urge. "Anticipate those urges," then walk away or close your eyes, Sugar told me. "Just don't pee all over the toilet or anything."

Which I did, several times. And my diary proved that the moments I was blinking most often were... when I was typing up the diary. So Sugar helped me employ a different set of three letters: CBT, for cognitive behavioural therapy, emphasising not so much long-term self-care as immediate, targeted tricks. She taught me to tolerate stress and create new mannerisms—you know, the opposite game. When I sensed a snort coming on, I breathed out of my mouth like Darth Vader at a yoga class. An ahem erupted; I swallowed my spit instead. As with any intensive regimen, behavioural reps pay off: Five weeks into my therapeutic pupu platter, I was picking up dog shit each morning with one eye open while exhaling through my dad-bod belly instead of my snout. The tic wasn't totally gone, but in my radicalised mind, I knew it never could be.

THERAPIST NO. 4:
FIGHT CLUB FOR YOUR MIND

I had plenty of sessions with Sugar ahead, one-on-one, but I kinda missed those reunion Zooms of the early pandemic—fraternities, aunties, Hamilton—when we could swap solitude for solace, personal anxiety for an orchestra of it. And I did have an hour and a half free on Thursdays. So I signed up for eight weeks of the DBT self-help group that was recommended by my shrink, at the Center for Anxiety in New York City, with eight total strangers.

The first rule of Group was you must show up for Group. The second rule of Group was... you do not log out of Group. The cheerleader of a host shared TED Talks on his screen, then asked if everyone was ready to use their "wise mind." Crickets. Sitting through this Zoom made me nod off faster than watching bad golf on TV. But there was real talk amid the woo-woo, and in the fourth week, a woman in the top-left box of our Group grid explained that she had been worried about the primal, hunter-gatherer fear of becoming ostracised from friend groups, so she'd brazenly been more vocal than the rest of us. I unmuted myself and confessed that, in a pandemicised panic, I'd straight-up forgotten how to make friends in the first place.

That week at daycare drop-off, I admitted to Group, a cool new dad had introduced himself; I'd disguised my eye convulsion behind a pair of Ray-Bans, fogged up my mask, and airballed a fist bump. This was not merely anxiety, which my longtime analyst had originally identified as the source of the tic. This was shame, explained our Group leader—the urge may be to hide, but the opposite game says to let your secret out. I began to speak about my tic freely in and out of Group, like Ed Norton in *Fight Club* crying into Meat Loaf's man boobs. I'd thought I craved company, but what I truly needed was feedback—not a couch but a springboard.

"No type of therapy is going to make the pandemic go away," Dr. Marcia Kimeldorf, director of clinical services at the Center for Anxiety, reminded me. "Everybody's freaking out. So to be able to have that group is a lifeline—and it's based on learning tools and skills, not telling us your deepest, darkest secrets or the way your mom treated you as a kid."

THERAPIST NO. 5:
ACRONYM OVERLOAD

Despite occasionally tripping over the dog leash with my eyes closed, I was virtually blink-free seven weeks into this self-induced therapy binge. But the stress behind the tic had only advanced: two daughters were indeed a handful, tuition was getting expensive and now my wife's dad was in the hospital. Group

TEN-SECOND TRICKS TO HACK YOUR ANXIETY

YOUR BAD HABIT MIGHT BE drinking, eating and/or shopping too much, or a tic like mine, or some other urge that doesn't enhance your life. But the skills I learned can help you accept those impulses and redirect them. "Mindfulness is just like a biceps curl: It takes a lot of repetition to get strong," says Dr. Marcia Kimeldorf of the Center for Anxiety. Like so. **—M.S.**

1 **URGE-SURF**

If you can sense the looming wave of a drink you don't need or a fight you don't have to pick, close your eyes, then rock side to side and up and down, from your toes to your heels.

2 **FLIP YOUR PALMS**

Stress often leaves the remnants of hunched backs and clenched fists. Place the backs of your hands on a desk; it'll feel like inserting a battery pack into your spine.

3 **HUG A TREE**

Literally. Or at least lean on one. Easier than a hike, and it counts as engaging with nature while activating your "wise mind" between reason and emotion.

4 **PEOPLE-WATCH**

While you're at the park, find a bench and create your own fan fiction for each passerby. Narrating in the moment lets you see beyond yourself.

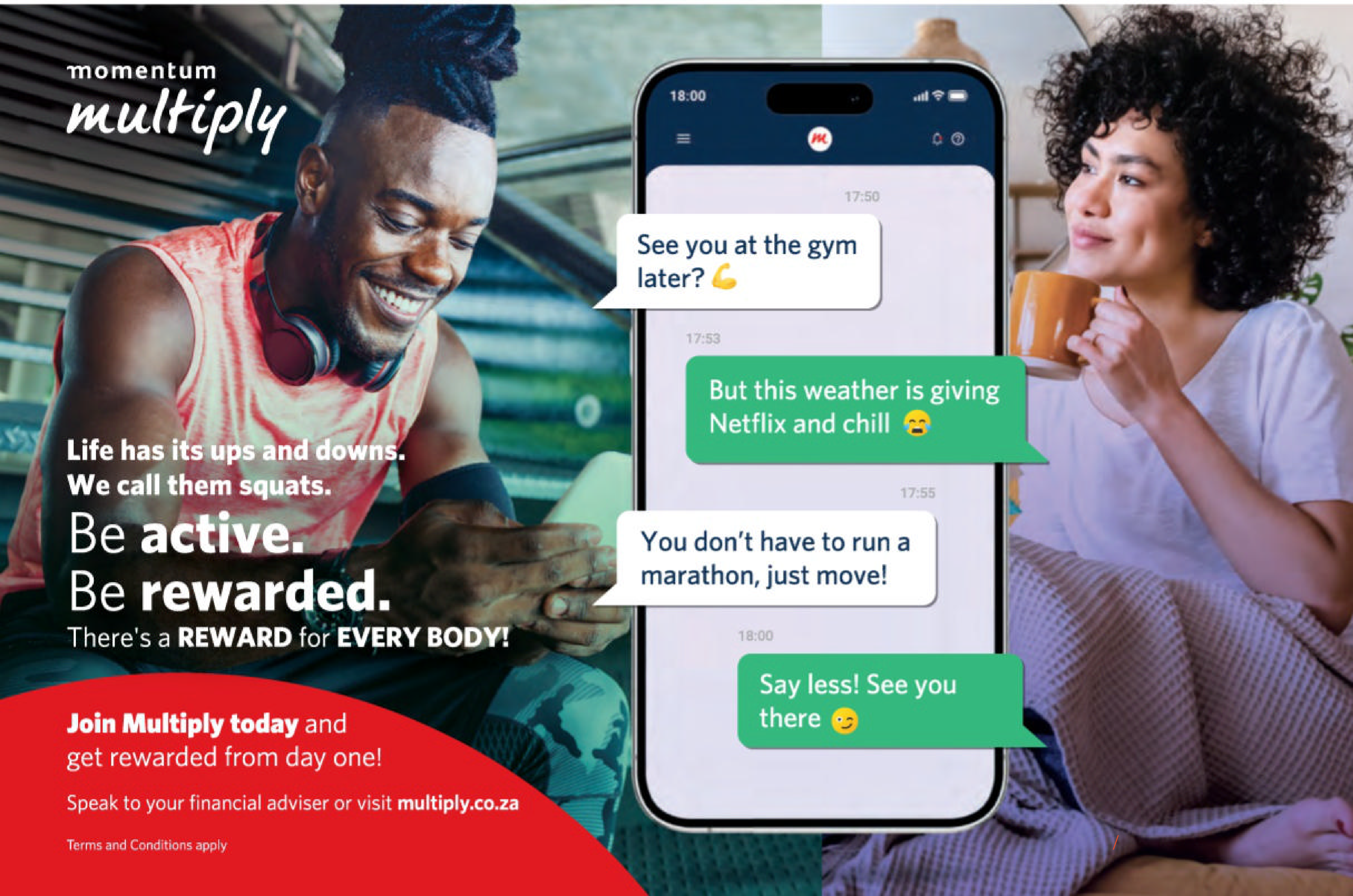
had equipped me with general brain hacks and YouTube bookmarks, but between the morning meditation, a different doc every other day and my actual personal trainer, I hadn't found much time for Group's homework.

My fellow Groupers and I had relied upon a spiral-bound textbook by Linehan, the OG of DBT, which made for a decent coaster. Flipping through DBT Skills Training one night with sports unfolding on the TV, though, I realised these tear-away handouts contained multitudes of free mindfulness. I scanned the index for acronyms: ABC stood for Accumulate positive emotions, Build mastery and Cope ahead of time—not easy. Habit reversal therapy (HRT) had me turning up my palms, prayer-like, in a drill designed for people who pull out their hair. And then there was the STOP method: Stop, as in freeze; Take a step back; Observe how your body is clenched; and Proceed mindfully, knowing that you are not gonna make it to daycare on time with that new kid. As with any good wine list, however, there is such a thing as too much tasting. Brain-hack memorisation only added to my general anxiety. The ahems returned, and my mental-health calendar left too little room for after-school parenting. But a friend recommended the startup Minded, which connected me to a guy on Zoom who could efficiently prescribe my meds for just over R1k per month. "Like Netflix," he said. And I'd come to appreciate that Therapist No. 1 had, for an hour every week, been making me do all the talking, without any of the teaching, all along.

We can be at our most stressed-out during moments of alleged calm.

At the conclusion of my two-month exercise, I dumped both my analyst of six years and the psychiatrist who'd recommended her own competition in the first place. I continued with Sugar for the tic but considered how to spend the medical aid savings elsewhere. Art therapy, maybe. I'd heard they were taking patients in the metaverse.

But my eyes were open. I had become a radical. Now every Saturday could be Opposite Day. So I got back out there, to the true rager that is a four-year-old's birthday party. I gathered myself for ten seconds at the door, in a state of fatherly Zen, and immediately lost my older daughter, only to find myself surrounded by four stranger dads. One of their aging parents was in the hospital as well. Two of them were solo parenting for the weekend. Another was new in town. With each piñata crack of awkwardness, our pandemic PTSD let loose a little more. We had become therapists for ourselves, then for one another. I took off my sunglasses and jumped into the bouncy castle. ■



momentum multiply

18:00

17:50
See you at the gym later? 💪

17:53
But this weather is giving Netflix and chill 😭

17:55
You don't have to run a marathon, just move!

18:00
Say less! See you there 😉

Life has its ups and downs.
We call them squats.
Be **active.**
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MINIMAL EFFORT, MAXIMUM HEALTH

MAKE THIS THE YEAR OF REACHING PEAK HEALTH—WITH LESS TIME AND HASSLE. USE THESE EIGHT NUMBERS AS YOUR LOW-SWEAT GUIDE TO A STRONGER YEAR.

BY LYNYA FLOYD & KIERAN LEGG

7

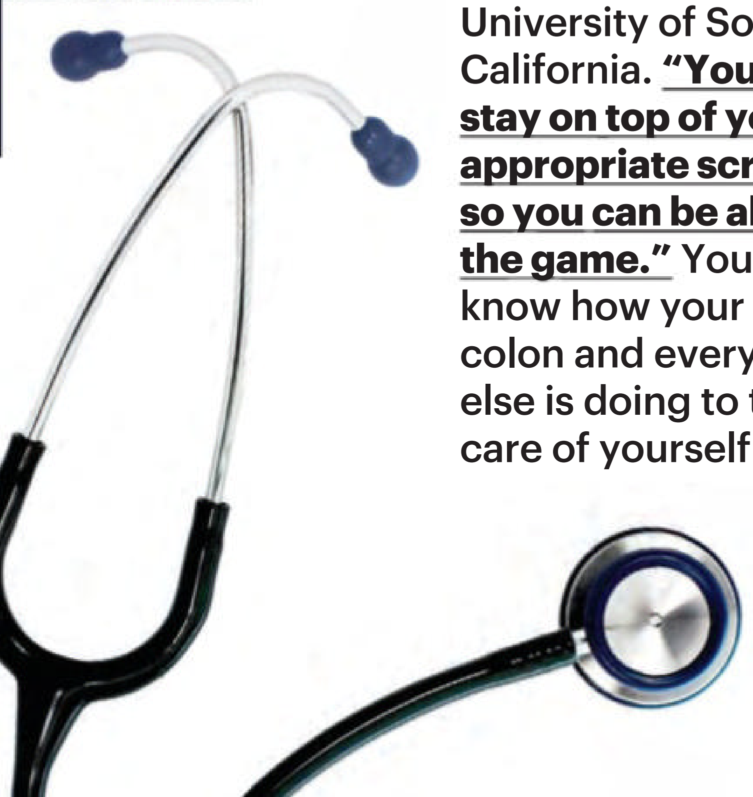
NUMBER OF MINUTES YOU NEED TO WORK OUT TO SEE BENEFITS

WHEN YOU'RE JUST starting to exercise, you don't need to slog through a long session. **Just seven minutes can improve your heart and lung health, insulin function, and muscular strength and endurance.** Pick 14 bodyweight exercises, some involving resistance (push-ups, squats, planks), others involving cardio (jumping jacks, step-ups). Do 20 seconds of one, rest for 10 seconds, and move to the next. There's plenty you can squeeze into just seven minutes; trust us, if you're just starting off you'll feel exhausted by the end. Caveat: "A more seasoned trainee will need a higher threshold to see increases in fitness," says clinical exercise physiologist and certified exercise practitioner Dean Somerset, owner of Somerset Fitness in Edmonton.

1

NUMBER OF DOCTOR'S VISITS YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON EACH YEAR

▸ Your annual physical needs to be, well, annual. "Most people only go to the doctor when there's an ache in their knee or a cough that won't quit, but preventive medicine is key," says Dr. Raj Dasgupta at the University of Southern California. **"You'll stay on top of your appropriate screenings so you can be ahead of the game."** You have to know how your heart, colon and everything else is doing to take care of yourself right.



DAN SAELINGER/TRUNK ARCHIVE (TOP LEFT). GETTY IMAGES (REMAINING).

0

NUMBER OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS YOU NEED THIS YEAR

"BIG RESOLUTIONS can create immense anxiety because there are so many opportunities for something to go 'wrong' over the course of a year," says Tara McMullin, author of the goal-setting book *What Works*. **Plan in three-month segments instead,** she says. You'll get predictable times to take stock of what's working and pivot on what's not. Bonus: we're much more confident about what we can do over three months, and more confidence makes you more likely to achieve a goal.

3

NUMBER OF THERAPY SESSIONS YOU'LL START TO SEE IMPROVEMENT

▸ According to some research, around 30% of people will attain lasting mental health benefits after just three therapy sessions. **However, up to 50% will begin to experience a degree of relief within at most 8 sessions**. Bottom line: the numbers are in yourfavour. If you're struggling, scheduling a session might be one of the most effective ways to turn the tides.

13

NUMBER OF MINUTES IT TAKES FOR MEDITATION TO WORK

▸ Researchers at New York University found that guided meditation doesn't even require 15 minutes a day to **bring on decreased negative mood, enhanced attention, better memory and lower anxiety.** Instead, aim for 13, and apps like Ten Percent Happier, Calm and Liberate are painless ways to get started.

2

NUMBER OF MINUTES YOU NEED TO SPEND FOAM ROLLING

"WHEN YOU PUSH on a pressure point with a foam roller, your thumb, or any device, **it can take about 90 to 120 seconds for the tissue to spasm and then fully release tension,"** says Somerset. So there's no need to spend all morning rolling a few tight spots. Pro tip: "Roll into a spot of *mild* discomfort, breathe and imagine the tissue relaxing under the pressure. Then move on to another spot," he says. "If it's too intense, the tissue will contract and not relax."

5

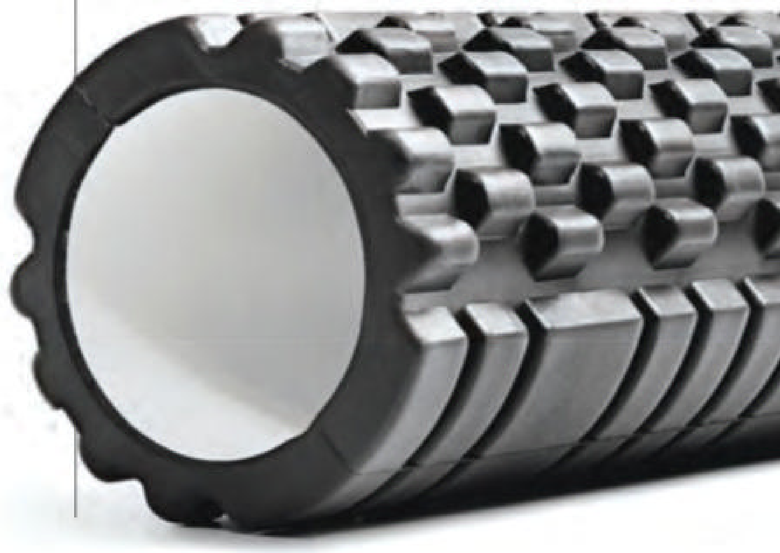
NUMBER OF GOOD FRIENDS IT TAKES TO BOOST YOUR HEALTH

"THERE'S A HUGE amount of epidemiological research showing that the **best predictor of your physical wellness, mental health and even longevity is tied to the number and quality of close friendships you have,"** says Dr. Robin Dunbar, author of *Friends: Understanding the Power of Our Most Important Relationships*. To shore up your friendships, ask people to do things with you. Men are often better at connecting side by side than just sitting across from each other over drinks.

2

NUMBER OF MINUTES IT TAKES TO INCREASE YOUR QUIT-SMOKING SUCCESS

A VERY SHORT conversation with a doctor about smoking was enough to boost the likelihood that people would be smoke-free six months later, according to the most recent research review from the Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group. "So many patients I meet with say they've tried everything to quit, but often **they're not aware of all the tools we have in our arsenal to help with smoking cessation,"** says Dasgupta.



Getty Images

MAKE YOUR EYES SAY AHHHH

YOUR EYES HAVE BEEN WORKING OVERTIME. DISCOVER EXACTLY WHAT'S TO BLAME FOR ALL THAT REDNESS, DRYNESS, FUZZY VISION AND GENERAL BURNOUT—AND HOW YOU CAN FIND RELIEF.

BY ALICE OGLETHORPE

THE CAUSE:

LED HEADLIGHTS

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT of cars have these bulbs, which are brighter and sharper than ever. Oncoming cars with LEDs can make your vision skip a beat. "Your retina photoreceptors get washed out, which takes some time to recover from," says Dr. Theodore Leng, an associate professor of ophthalmology at Stanford University School of Medicine.

THE FIX: Until the newly approved "smart" LED lights (they adjust to oncoming cars) are prevalent, glance slightly down and to the right of the road until the bright beams pass. Also, "dry eyes can be more sensitive to light," says Dr. Thomas Steinemann, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, so point air vents away from your face.

THE CAUSE:

SCREENS, SCREENS, AND MORE SCREENS

WE NOW USE our digital devices 60 percent more often than we did pre-pandemic. Because you blink less frequently and fully when viewing a screen, your eyes aren't well hydrated. "When your tear film breaks up from dryness, it isn't just uncomfortable—you also don't see as well," says Dr. Richard Gibralter, an associate professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at Montefiore Medical Centre. And focusing for hours at close range leads to eye fatigue, headaches and blurred vision.

THE FIX: Ideally, follow the 20/20/20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet (about 6m) away for 20 seconds. But even eye doctors admit that's hard to do. At least try to close your eyes for a few seconds or glance down a hallway or out a window as often as you remember. (Now is good.) For immediate relief, use lubricating eye drops—look for the words "artificial tears" or "lubricating" on the label.

JUNK OR SCIENCE?

VISION-CORRECTING EYEDROPS ARE SET TO HIT THE WORLD, PEGGED AS A QUICK FIX FOR ON-SIGHT ISSUES. BUT A BOTTLE (R1 400) LASTS ONLY ABOUT A MONTH, AND "THE DROPS MAKE YOUR PUPILS TINY, SO THE WORLD MAY LOOK DARKER," **DR. STEINEMANN** SAYS.

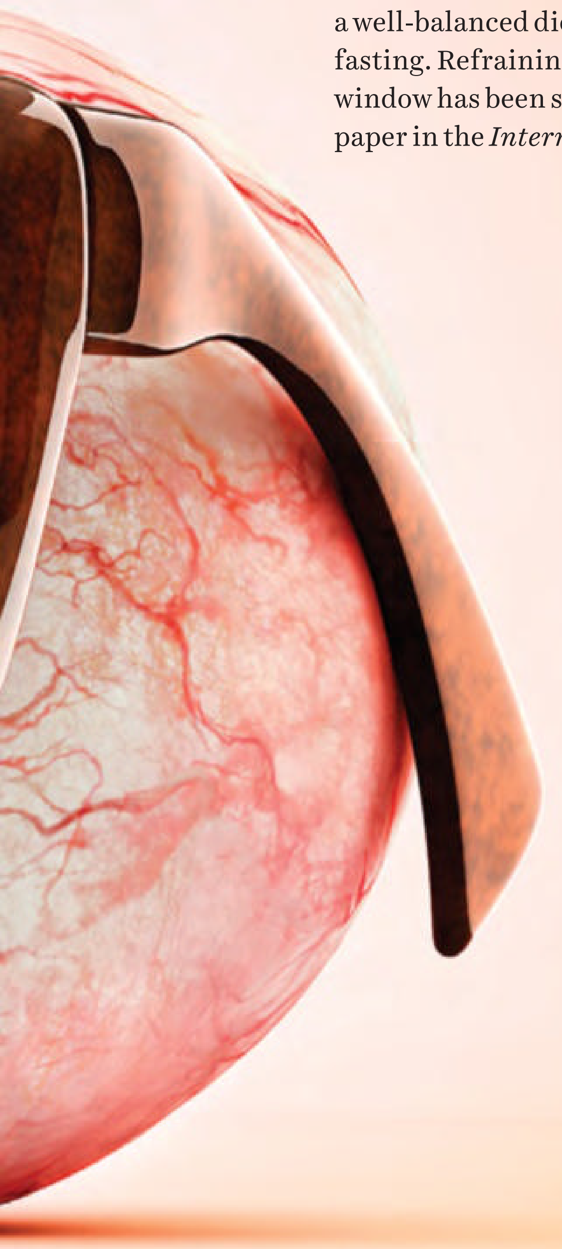
GETTY IMAGES

THE CAUSE:

SUGARY, CARBY SNACKS

PIZZA, ENERGY BARS, CHIPS—these grab-and-go goods can spike your blood sugar. If you have diabetes or prediabetes, elevated glucose can damage the tiny blood vessels in your retina, says Leng. This can potentially lead to blurring, distortion and vision loss.

THE FIX: "Levelling out your blood sugar is the healthiest thing you can do for your eyes," says Steinemann. The best way to do it is with a well-balanced diet high in fibre. A more radical approach: intermittent fasting. Refraining from eating meals outside of an eight- or ten-hour window has been shown to lower glucose levels, according to a review paper in the *International Journal of Endocrinology*.



THE CAUSE:

SO MANY ALLERGENS

CLIMATE CHANGE is making pollen seasons longer and more intense—one reason your eyes may feel more irritated and itchy and look redder than ever before.

THE FIX: Pick the right allergy eye drops. Skip redness reducers and reach for a product that contains an antihistamine. Antihistamines block your eyes' receptors for histamine, a chemical your body makes in response to an allergen. Equally good are "mast-cell stabilisers," products that block histamine from being released in the first place. Look for the ingredients ketotifen or olopatadine. Trial and error is the main way to know which works better for you. No need to rush out for contact lenses that contain an antihistamine—the drops work fine, and if you're not used to contacts, these can just add "a layer of complexity and hassle into your day," Steinemann says.

HOW TO PICK THE PERFECT EYE DROP

- **GO PRESERVATIVE-FREE.** Preservatives can be irritating, says Dr. Mina Massaro-Giordano at the University of Pennsylvania Scheie Eye Institute. No-preservative drops come in bottles now, not just in tiny, expensive vials.
- **DON'T OBSESS OVER INGREDIENTS.** There are small differences in how lubricating drops form a protective layer over your eye, but there's no bottom-line rule for which is better for whom. They're all soothing, Massaro-Giordano says.
- **PAY ATTENTION TO PERCENTAGES.** The higher the percentage of the lubricating ingredient, the thicker the eye drop is going to be and the blurrier it can make your vision. Go with a lower percentage in the day and higher at night.

3 RULES FOR NO-REGRET LASER EYE SURGERY

When people get laser eye surgery to correct their vision, most go with LASIK, since it's a household name and promises fast recovery. The trouble: dry eyes are significantly more prevalent with LASIK than with other surgeries, and I've only seen that increase with more screen time. PRK and ASA (advanced surface ablation) shape the cornea without a cut, resulting in far less damage and dryness. Use these strategies before you sign up for any laser vision-correction surgery.
—DR. CRAIG MOSKOWITZ

SHOP AROUND

The right vision-correction surgery must reflect the patient's lifestyle. If you have a job where clear vision—especially at night—is important, then the halos, haze and starbursts that can appear after LASIK spell trouble. If you play contact sports—or have a baby—an accidental poke to the eye can dislodge the corneal flap left by LASIK. If your doc isn't willing to recommend alternatives, find a new doc.

CHECK THEIR EXPERIENCE

Ask the doctor how many times they've corrected prescriptions similar to yours. You never want to have the highest prescription that a surgeon has ever operated on. Your surgeon should recognise the limitations of laser eye surgery for very high prescriptions.

FIND OUT HOW LONG RECOVERY TAKES

Make sure your doc is clear that PRK and ASA require a longer recovery period because the corneal surface needs to heal. LASIK's is almost immediate, but you live with the effects of the flap cut.

Dr. Craig Moskowitz, is the founder of Moskowitz Eye Care in New York City.

HOW TO DO
DATA RIGHT

THE DELUGE OF NUMBERS FROM YOUR WEARABLES CAN TELL YOU A LOT—BUT NOT EVERYTHING. READ WHAT YOU NEED. OPTIMISE YOUR LIFE.

BY CHRISTIE ASCHWANDEN

JAN
FEB
MARCH
APRIL
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEPT

GETTY IMAGES

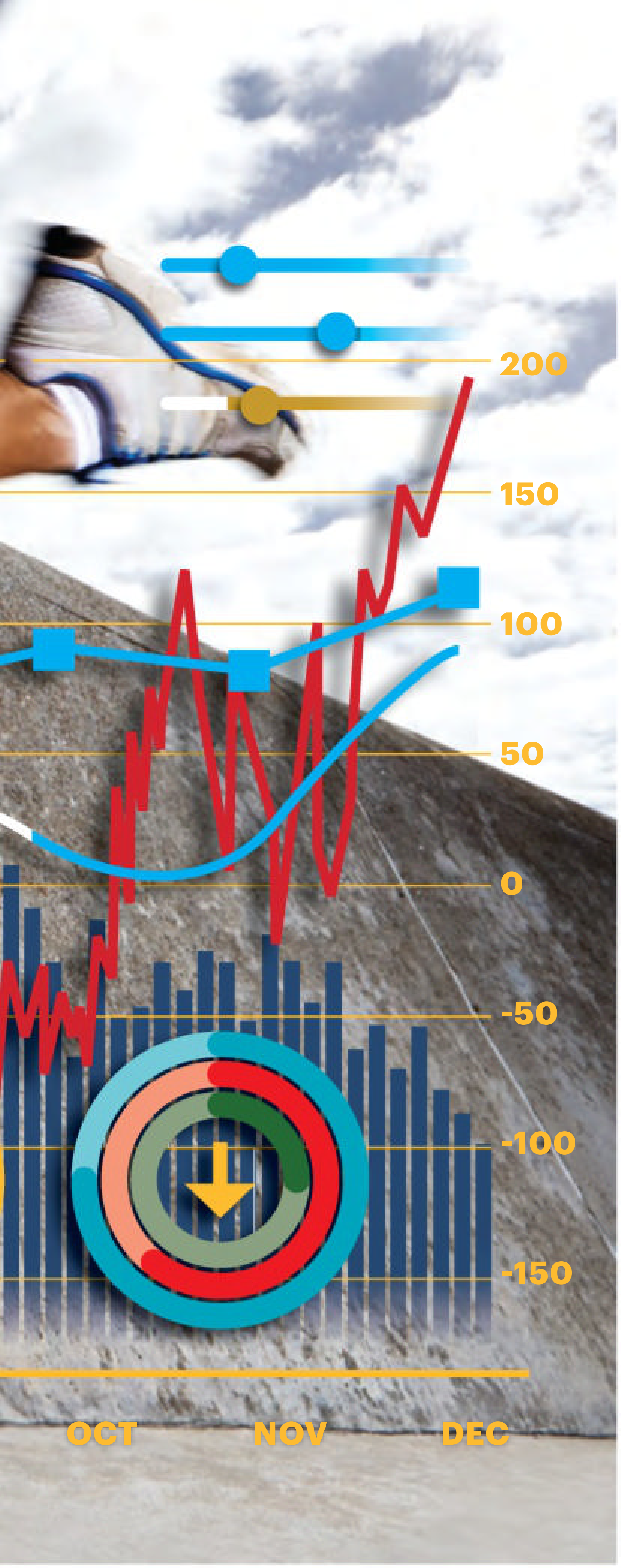
IF SOMEONE ASKS YOU, "How are you doing?" and you feel the need to pull up your tracker app, we get you. Humanity has entered the golden age of health and fitness tracking. Everybody wears a tracker now, whether strapped around the wrist or cuffed around a finger. The global tracker industry was already worth R708 billion in 2021, and it is forecast to grow to more than R2.3 trillion by 2028. A legion of companies—Garmin, Fitbit, Samsung, Oura, Huawei and so many more—advertise wearables that promise to quantify everything from heart rate and stress level to metabolic rate, fitness level, recovery status and sleep quality.

And that promise is alluring: if you can track it, you can improve it, these brands argue. Except that some experts are now seeing the symptoms of overtracking. "One risk of all this measuring is that you become so obsessed with metrics that you forget the reasons you're out there—things like recreation, fun, hanging out with your buddies," says Dr. Michael J. Joyner, a human-physiology researcher at the Mayo Clinic. Even sleep is no refuge, because you feel pressure to attain a high sleep score.

Yet there is a way to make your tracker work for you. Follow the new rules to streamline what it tells you, optimise your life and stay in control of your device—not the other way around.

REFINE YOUR FOCUS

IDENTIFY TWO or three metrics that support what you want most. For instance, if your goal is to finish a 10K, then **the distance you can run without stopping is more relevant than something like your respiration rate,** explains Joyner. "You have to ask yourself how collecting more-granular data is going to help you achieve



your goals." Of course, pace will be relevant, and a healthy amount of sleep can help you get there, too. But how heat-acclimatised your device thinks you are and how much recovery you need from a workout may not be accurate enough to benefit you. And you probably don't need a tracker to tell you whether your stress level is high or low.

USE IT TO LOSE IT

THE IDEA IS that eventually you won't even need a tracker to hit your goals. When used wisely, tracking technology can help you develop your inner compass, says performance expert and coach Steve Magness, author of *Do Hard Things*. You might not require it to understand you need more hours of sleep, but seeing how little you get can help you prioritise rest more. And when you don't, a sleep score can help you pay attention to what it feels like when you haven't gotten enough. When things match up—you kind of know what the score is before you even look, and then you see that you're right—the tracker may have served its purpose. The next step is connecting what you do during the day with how it makes you feel the next day, then making adjustments to get more sleep—or to stop doing whatever interferes with it (screens, caffeine, keeping the "play next episode" setting enabled, etc.).

Trackers can send you down the right path without nagging you. Performance coach Brad Stulberg, author of *The Practice of Groundedness,* worked with a high-powered executive who told him that wearing an Oura ring helped him drink less alcohol. The device flagged sleep impairments caused by overdoing it. "It was almost like a little reminder on his finger not to drink so much," says Stulberg. "Did he need to spend [R8 000] on a device plus the membership fees to deliver this boilerplate health advice? No." But the thing about basic health advice is that it can be hard to follow, so if a tracking device can nudge you in the right direction, that's worth something.

STOP AT 9.99

CAN YOU END A RUN when your watch hits 9.99 kilometres—or when your step count reads 9,999? Magness urges you to try it—and reap the mental benefit that comes from not letting your tracker dictate your behaviours. Stopping short "trains you to sit with the discomfort—to navigate the anxiety and be okay with it. Learning to accept and sit with discomfort is what toughness is all about," he says. And while the tracker can't spit out a toughness or resilience score, it can help you hone those aspects. "The question here is: **how much decision-making power and autonomy are you willing to cede to some electronic device?**" asks Joyner. "If my device says I should take it easy but I feel pretty good today and want to push it, do I let the algorithm tell me no?" Go ahead and watch your numbers, but pay attention to what your body is telling you, too. ■

THE VERDICT ON TRACKER DATA

To track or not to track? Here's what experts say is opt-in or opt-out.

👍

HOURS OF SLEEP

This metric affects everything: athletic performance, mood, cognitive ability, energy. Most trackers do a pretty decent job of measuring it.

👎

CALORIES BURNED

Those counters that purport to measure how much you've burned are never accurate, and fixating on them can make you anxious, Stulberg says.

👍

DAILY STEPS

It shouldn't be your only activity metric, but unless you're doing an exercise that won't register as steps, like swimming or cycling, your step count gives a decent idea of how much you move.

👎

PROPRIETARY RECOVERY SCORES

Until these secret algorithms are published and validated in scientific literature, you have to take the company's word for it that they really mean something, Joyner says. Right now they don't mean much.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN SEED OIL

YOUR PROSTATE! YOUR HEART! YOUR HAIR! IS THERE ANYTHING THIS SUPPLEMENT CAN'T HELP? THE RESEARCH SEEMS TO SAY…WE NEED SOME MORE RESEARCH.

BY PAUL KITA

THE CLAIMS

Supplement manufacturers advertise that their pumpkin seed oils, extracts and capsules support prostate health, improve heart function and even reverse male-pattern baldness. Incredible, right?

WHAT'S ACTUALLY TRUE

The prostate stuff. Men who took 360mg of pumpkin seed oil twice a day had fewer symptoms related to their enlarged prostate, a 2021 study found. The oil didn't work as well as the drug (tamsulosin) used in the study, but men on the oil did not report side effects.

WHAT'S A STRETCH

Supplement companies argue that pumpkin seed oil is good for your heart because it's high in essential fatty acids. Data shows that a diet rich in these fats is beneficial, but hardly any human studies link pumpkin seed oil with a healthier heart.

WHAT'S STILL UNCLEAR

Yes, a 2014 study found that men with male-pattern baldness who took 400mg of a pumpkin seed oil supplement daily for 24 weeks regrew hair. Except the oil was just one ingredient in the supplement. We need more evidence.

SHOULD YOU TAKE IT?

If you have an enlarged prostate, pumpkin seed oil may help. "Take note of the dose used in the 2021 study: 360mg twice daily. Make sure the dose meets what's been shown [effective] in studies," says Registered Dietitian Dr. Chris Mohr. "And always buy a brand that is verified by a third party like NSF."

TEXT A DIETITIAN!

This month, we hit up Registered Dietitian *Dr. Chris Mohr*

CAN HOT SAUCE REALLY FIRE UP YOUR METABOLISM?

▶ There's some science suggesting the hot chemical in 🌶 may cause a temporary increase in body temp, which boosts calorie 🔥

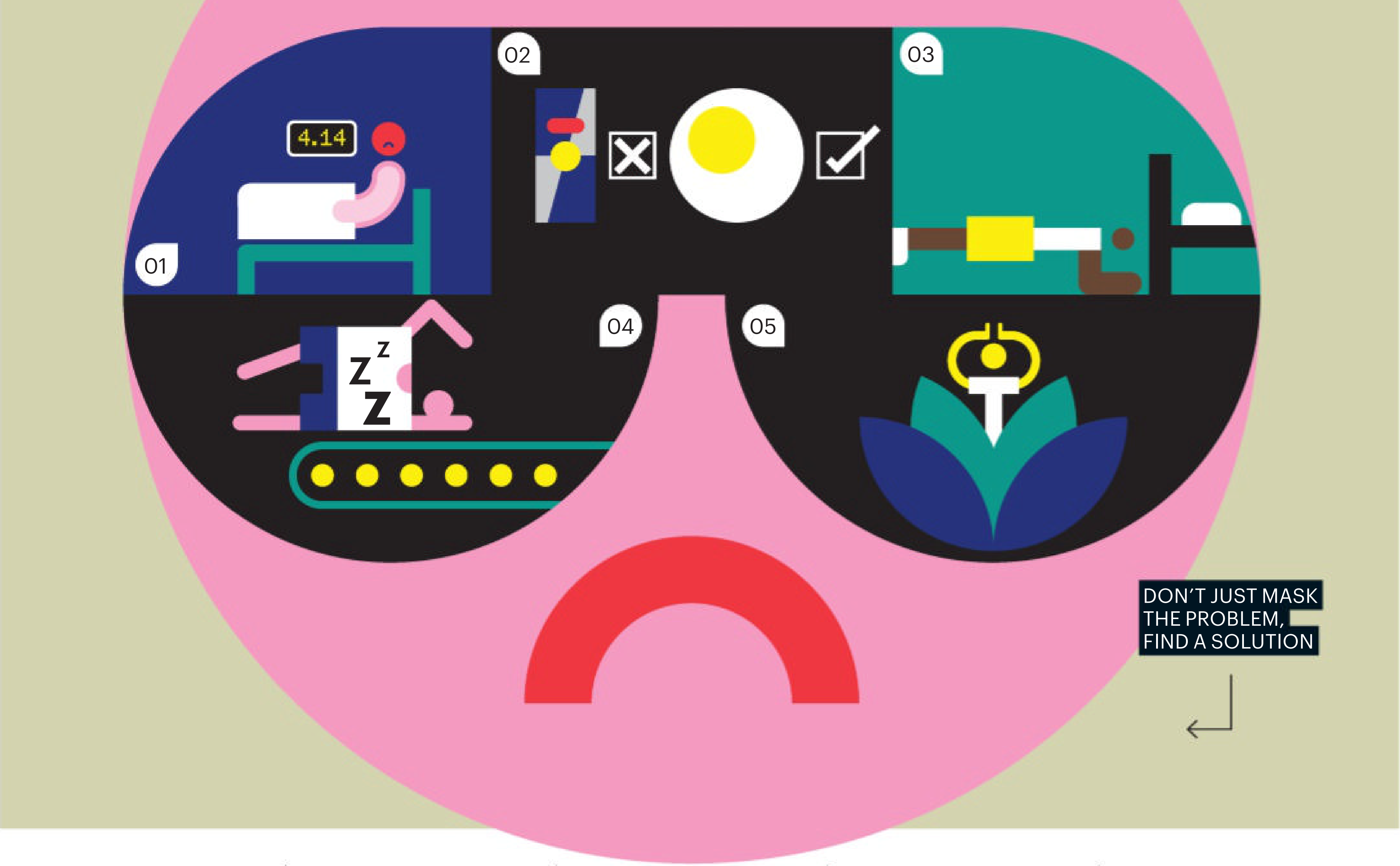
SO CHUG HOT SAUCE, LOSE WEIGHT?

▶ That might be a bit aggressive. One study showed adding hot sauce to 🍽 slows eating, so you might eat fewer calories, but you'll benefit more from regular 🏃 and 🏋

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN...

...I'M SLEEP DEPRIVED?

SOMETIMES, EVEN WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS, THOSE SOLID SEVEN HOURS ARE ELUSIVE. BUT UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF A RESTLESS NIGHT AND YOU CAN FIGHT BACK.



DON'T JUST MASK THE PROBLEM, FIND A SOLUTION

WORDS: TROY DA COSTA; SCARLETT WRENCH | ILLUSTRATION: PETER GRUNDY. *AUTHOR OF THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP, HEATHERDARWALLSMITH.COM

01

REST EASY

First, some good news: you might actually have slept better than you think. Some regions of the brain may be asleep while others are awake, explains Heather Darwall-Smith, a psychotherapist*, so even if you felt restless well into the dawn hours, you might still have fallen within the sleep threshold. Anxiety about sleep loss can often perpetuate the problem, so try to avoid clock-watching if you can. "Don't feed the beast," she says.

02

FUEL SMARTLY

Missed sleep can disrupt the appetite-balancing hormones ghrelin and leptin, causing cravings for food your body doesn't need. Resist the urge to use Red Bull and biscuits as a crutch—oscillating blood-sugar levels further intensify energy dips, making you more tired. Prioritise protein, says Darwall-Smith, especially at breakfast. Mid-morning tea may help, too: its amino acid L-theanine improves feelings of alertness and calm at the same time.

03

JOG ON, MAN

The golden hour for growth-hormone release is shortly after you drop into deep sleep, says Darwall-Smith, so while a single restless night won't stunt your gains, it can impact muscle growth if the nights start stacking up. Expect to perform below your usual capacity, too—but that's no reason to sit down all day. A study by Japan's University of Tsukuba found 10 minutes of cardio is enough to increase blood flow to the brain, enhancing focus.

04

NAP STAR

Sleep deprived or not, your circadian rhythm naturally includes a mid-afternoon energy dip. Choose between a power nap (10 to 20 minutes) or full sleep cycle (90-plus minutes), says Darwall-Smith. Avoid the middle ground or you'll wake up groggy. Resting during the day can help you maintain consistent sleep/wake times and so is preferable to a lie-in. As a bonus? Studies suggest napping boosts athletic performance.

05

THE LONG RUN

Chronic sleep loss (six hours or less over multiple months) can come with other issues, such as high blood pressure or depression. But assuming you've addressed the key stuff—lack of daytime light, alcohol etc—try switching your focus from chasing sleep to pursuing relaxation. Learn to self-soothe: Darwall-Smith recommends researching non-sleep deep rest or yoga nidra. Even a bath and a book can help. Let the rest take care of itself.

BOX VS GYM

TRAINING PLACES

CROSSFIT HAS BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST FITNESS CHAIN, BUT HOW DOES YOUR LOCAL GYM STAND UP?

260

Average calories burned in 20-min workout Cindy, in one study, with a HR of 171bpm.

10km/h

The speed at which an 80kg man would need to run on a treadmill for 20 mins in order to score the same burn.

MEMBERS' PERKS

Comfort isn't CrossFit's MO. Expect an impressive rig, weight plates aplenty and cool branded tees. Don't expect perfumed towels and expensive shampoo.

As well as offering a broader range of classes, the gym is your best fit if saunas, steam rooms and swimming pools are a central part of your wellness regimen.

GO THERE FOR...

- Olympic lifting
- Sweaty WODs
- Gymnastic skills
- Team comps

- Circuit training
- Yoga flows
- Spin class
- Old-school bodybuilding

POWER PLAYS

-13% CrossFit-style kipping pull-ups activate 13.4% less bicep muscle than regular varieties*—making them more accessible but arguably less effective.

+12% The potential gains in muscle power over eight weeks via machine-based training*. By comparison, CrossFit's Olympic-style lifting delivered "trivial improvements".

THE BIG WINS

- Programmed workouts
- Greater accountability
- Trackable progress
- More competitive

- Easier to schedule
- Broader options
- Can wear headphones
- Usually cheaper

TEAMING UP

Working out in a group lowers stress levels by 26%, while solo trainers don't always see the same benefits, according to an American Osteopathic Association study.

Alone time has its merits, too: research suggests that people who enjoy their own company are less likely to experience episodes of depression.

THE *MH* VERDICT

▸ **THE BOX WINS!** To borrow a phrase from 2016, "Don't @ us". For community spirit, structure and progression, CrossFit out-muscles the majority of commercial gyms. But as long as you're moving forwards, it doesn't really matter where you're working from.

WORDS: SCARLETT WRENCH | PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP HAYNES. *SOURCES: JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIAN STRENGTH & CONDITIONING.

MH PARTNERSHIP

5 TIPS TO COPE WITH STRESS IN THE NEW YEAR

AND HOW VITAMINS MAY HELP

FIND OUT HOW HEALTHIER HABITS, MENTAL LESSONS AND THE RIGHT VITAMINS CAN HELP YOU BREATHE EASY OVER THE NEXT 365.

The new year is a time for resolutions, goal-setting and fresh starts, but it can also bring stress and anxiety as we try to navigate the unknown. From financial pressures to health concerns and everything in between, the beginning of a new year can be a challenging time for many. Don't let stress get the best of you! Although there is no way to completely eliminate stress from your life, B vitamins may help benefit your mood and stress levels.[1]

What Is New Year Stress?

It's easy to get caught up in the "New Year, New You" mentality and forget to take things one step at a time and focus on self-care. While resolutions frequently focus on developing new habits that will help us get into better physical shape, getting into better mental and emotional shape can also provide significant benefits.

New Year stress is a real phenomenon that can have a major influence on mood, affecting your sense of well-being, behaviour and health. While a small amount of stress over short periods in young healthy individuals may cause them to be adaptive, prolonged exposure to high amounts of stress in older or unhealthy individuals may damage health.[2]

BIOPLUS VIT-ALITY
B6+12

Five Tips to Cope with New Year Stress

Consider these tips to make the start of 2023 more manageable:

1. Recognise your personal triggers: What situations agitate you physically and mentally? Once you understand your stress triggers, you can avoid them when possible and cope when you can't.[3a]

2. Practice relaxation techniques: Deep breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are all good ways to relax. Taking a break to refocus can have long-term benefits.[3b]

3. Be active and eat healthily: Make time to go for a walk outside, ride your bike, or join a dance class. Daily exercise releases stress-relieving hormones into the body and improves overall physical health, while eating well can also help to keep your mood stable.[3c]

4. Get enough rest: Getting too little sleep can trigger symptoms of some mental health conditions, such as mania in bipolar disorder.3d

5. Supplement your diet with B vitamins: B complexes, contained in BIOPLUS VIT-ALITY B6 + B1244, may help lift your spirits and improve your cognitive performance.[5]

How Vitamin B May Help With Your Stress

B vitamins play important roles in the nervous system. Specifically, B1 (thiamine) B6 (pyridoxine), and B12 (cobalamin) help keep the nervous system healthy.6a The body does not store B vitamins, so people need to get some from their diets.[6b]

The BIOPLUS® VIT-ALITY range is available at selected Dis-Chem and Clicks stores, as well as selected independent pharmacies nationwide. For more information, head over to adcock.co.za/ProdVitamins/Bioplus and join the conversation on Facebook.

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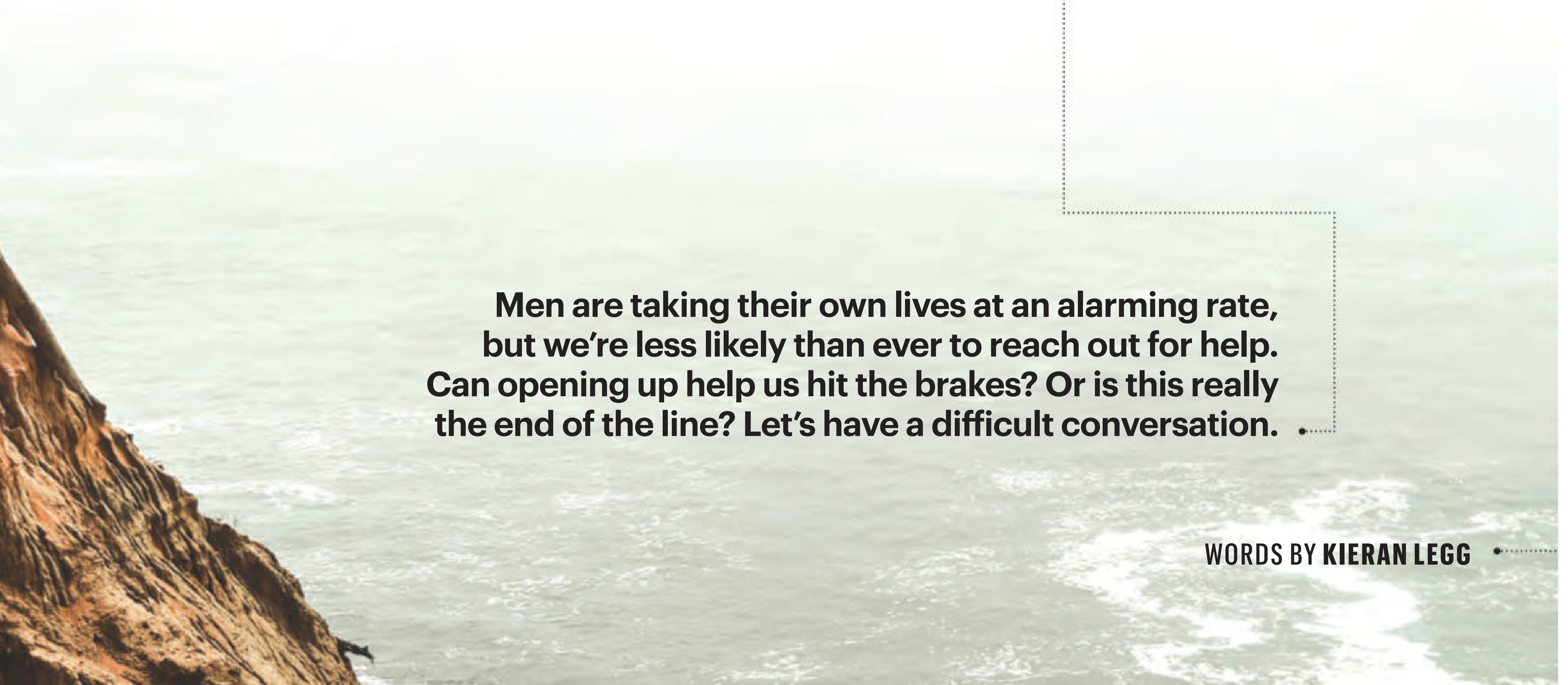
Scan for references & additional details.

BIOPLUS® VIT-ALITY

WE NEED TO TALK

Men are taking their own lives at an alarming rate, but we're less likely than ever to reach out for help. Can opening up help us hit the brakes? Or is this really the end of the line? Let's have a difficult conversation.

WORDS BY **KIERAN LEGG**



Nothing was obviously wrong in his life, but somewhere along the line he'd decided to end it all. Victor* had a decent job, a comfortable apartment and enough friends to fill his weekends with activities. However, life felt bland, monotonous and inescapable. "I just felt numb," he says. "I was going through the motions, but I wasn't enjoying anything."

When he was alone, those feelings would turn into a constant rumination; manifesting as a single, repeating question: "What if this is what the rest of my life is going to be like?" And, unable to open up to anyone, a dark answer started to emerge. "In that headspace, it felt like there was nothing else: this was it," he admits. "And I couldn't deal with another week of it all, let alone years."

Plans to take his own life began to take shape. And those plans, gave him comfort, promising an instant release from the cycle he felt trapped in. One day after an unremarkable disagreement with a colleague, he decided the day had come. However, as he arrived home, he was struck by an inexplicable impulse. Victor picked up the phone and called his friend. The pair's relationship was surface-level, relegated, like many male friendships, to occasional 5-aside football games, drinking and dick jokes. "But I thought, seriously thought this was the end—so what was the harm in opening up right now," he says.

That phone call saved his life.

Silent Desperation

Victor's friend wouldn't go on to become a confidant, or "his rock", but the catalyst for a new perspective on life. In the space of a five-minute call, where his dumbstruck friend tried to argue him off a cliff, Victor felt an intense relief. He'd spoken the words, the questions and dark answers out loud, and in the air they lost most of their weight.

Opening up is a profound act, which—although terrifying—can be a lifeline when you're in a dark place, says Sikander Kalla, a Registered Clinical Psychologist and founder of Cohesive Collaboration, a mental health consulting brand. Your head, after all, is an echo chamber."Men are living lives of silent desperation," he says. "Our lives are so focused on just simply surviving that we start to lose our purpose and that can leave you feeling hopeless, hollow and disillusioned."

Those three words sum up Victor's experience, but he's just one of many in a sea of faces gritting their teeth and suffering alone. After his phone call, Victor sought out therapy, and together with medication and vocalising his thoughts, he was able climb from his own den of despair. But far more men never make that phone call. In 2020, there were on average 130 deaths by suicide per day. Men made up almost 70% of those deaths, and this figure is expected to continue rising.

However, mental struggles and psychological issues aren't unique to any particular gender. In fact, according to a Mental Health Foundation report, women are three times more likely to experience common mental health issues than their male counterparts. But women are also far more likely to seek help, or simply just confide in their peers. (At the University of Cape Town, for example, men accounted for less than 25% of those making use of Student Wellness Services.) In stark contrast, research has shown that instead of turning to each other, guys would rather engage in unhealthy coping mechanisms like alcohol or drugs. In short, we're sweeping our problems under the rug.

"Hegemonic masculinity—the idea of this stoic, strong, independent man—still dominates our ideas of what it means to be a man," says Kalla. "Our silence is rooted in that sentiment, and we find it difficult to break the mould."

Victor says he just didn't have practice. The idea of discussing his emotions was a foreign concept. He could be angry at the rugby, or flipping his shit at a bad driver on the N2; but to lend words—the type of words he only discovered through therapy—to those abstract feelings weighing him down was like trying to learn a foreign language.

"As men, we're hardwired to seek out practical solutions," Kalla has noted in his time practising. "But emotions cannot be solved

*NAME WAS CHANGED TO PROTECT THEIR IDENTITY | **SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC | OPENING IMAGE: ALAN TANG/UNSPLASH.COM

practically. You have to sit in them, process them, normalise them… It's a constant process of learning and re-learning that requires introspection, discipline and dedication."

Behind the Numbers

In a bid to understand these disproportionate suicide rates, it's tempting to explore the causes behind these alarming numbers. However, studies remain divided on the answers. For instance, research published in *BMC Psychiatry*, cited "being single", "retirement" and "unemployment" as common triggers. For Kalla, this makes sense as they're all polar opposites of the thriving, successful male archetype that's still held up as the gold standard.

However, these "trends" are just that, large sweeping answers that gloss over the minutiae of the human mind. After all, some men are contending with serious, diagnosable (often left undiagnosed) mental health issues; chemical imbalances that make them more inclined to lapse into rumination and ultimately suicidal ideation. Others are grappling with their sexuality, falling out with loved ones, left reeling after the death of someone close to them, financial pressures, the list goes on (forever).

"These are truly challenging times," admits Kalla. "And they call for more resilience than ever before."

Nicholas Ingel, the owner of Emet Gyms in Joburg, has had his own brush with death. After years of drinking, a habit that started as a form of escape, Ingel says he had dug himself a hole "and couldn't see the light". "I'd sit at night with the barrel of a pistol in my mouth," he says. "I just couldn't see any other way out."

Decades down the line, it's difficult for him to remember those dark days. A long road to rehabilitation later, which sans the spirit-laced coping mechanism that had been his go-to since a teenager, was one of the hardest struggles of his life, but now he has perspective, clarity and—most importantly—purpose.

"In hindsight, it's never as bad as it seems," he says. And he knows; he's sat in a barren apartment room, unemployed with not a single cent to his name in the harsh aftermath of burning bridges with his closest family and friends. That was a sobering reality that could've driven him to drink, but something had changed: "I was working on my problems now, taking the smallest steps."

And he was talking to people, learning to open up like Victor did.

"When you focus on suicide, you narrow your vision, you stop looking for other solutions, other answers," says Ingel. "But they're always there."

One technique that the gym owner credits to saving his life is the "glad" game. It's a simple concept, but difficult to execute. "You ask yourself, 'What am I glad for?', and you list anything that comes to your mind. I'm glad I have ten toes, I'm glad I have my health… And then you expand from there, learning to be grateful for the things you still have."

Ingel's new-found vulnerability is a terrifying concept for many men, says Dan Wolf, a registered psychologist and a director at Houghton House (houghtonhouse.co.za), a treatment and rehabilitation group. "There's this phenomenon where vulnerability is perceived as weakness or incompetence," he adds.

"MEN ARE LIVING LIVES OF SILENT DESPERATION… OUR LIVES ARE SO FOCUSED ON JUST SIMPLY SURVIVING THAT WE START TO LOSE OUR PURPOSE AND THAT CAN LEAVE YOU FEELING HOPELESS, HOLLOW AND DISILLUSIONED"

Wax Out Work Woes

With many of us holed up in home offices, work-life balance has almost become a non-existent concept. And that's a problem, because carrying your 9-to-5 stressors into every hour can put you on a crash course towards some serious mental health issues. Thankfully, there are a few ways you can reclaim your afterhours for some much-needed R&R.

"Because of the way our minds work, we tend to keep 'open tabs' of any and all work and private-related tasks that we might be involved in," says Mark Baker, an organisational psychologist and the CEO of Mygrow. "These open tabs add to the mental load we are carrying and the sense of [feeling overwhelmed], even if it's subconscious."

He suggests two robust strategies to help "leave work at work".

Firstly, at the end of the day you should empty your mind of any unfinished tasks and create a priority list for the next day. "This allows you to leave with clarity of what the next day holds," he adds.

Secondly, you should use mindfulness techniques to dial up your ability to be present wherever you happen to be. That means that if you're off the clock, your mind isn't meandering back into conversations, presentations and stand-up meetings. Guided meditation sessions offered by apps such as Calm and Headspace can take you through the mental reps you'll need to stay present. But attending an in-person class can really force your mind to focus.

So instead, men suppress their emotions or rely on other immediately available "support" like alcohol and drugs. Stranding themselves from healthy support systems, these vices offer relief and help men maintain the character they've created: someone strong, self-sufficient and, ironically, not needing support. "But when your life is about performance, at some point you fall off the stage," says Wolf. He argues that men fundamentally misunderstand vulnerability. Being vulnerable is not only usually perceived as a strength by those around you, but can also help deepen the relationships men are so terrified of losing by opening up.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Suicide is a harsh word that conjures the worst images. And for those affected, the families and friends left in the wreckage, there's little consolation. Just questions, pain and more questions. But for many men, Victor, Ingel (myself included), the word has often offered a way out, a reprieve from the agony of existence, a dismal bright light at the end of a dark tunnel.

In many ways, I could relate with many parts of their stories. I had my own moment of reckoning when my almost-eight-year-long relationship (and marriage) fell apart. I couldn't open up. I was wracked by feelings of inadequacy, loneliness and shame. I suffered in silence, and on that island, the idea of ending my life didn't feel like something forbidden, but an easy escape.

It was only through starting a conversation—first with my family, then with a therapist and later my friends—that I started to heal. While it might feel like rehashing the same point, vulnerability is truly what matters most. But taking that leap of faith isn't easy.

If you're struggling, a great place to start is by asking whether your current approach is working, says Christine Pienaar, a Registered Counsellor with Mygrow. "It's difficult to motivate for change if it doesn't feel necessary. So if someone was scared or uncomfortable about opening up I would begin by asking if keeping silent is leading to a healthy emotional life."

> "WHEN YOU FOCUS ON SUICIDE, YOU NARROW YOUR VISION, YOU STOP LOOKING FOR OTHER SOLUTIONS, OTHER ANSWERS. BUT THEY'RE ALWAYS THERE."

What are the consequences of maintaining this silence? What are you doing instead of opening up? Are you self-medicating? Are these coping mechanisms going to help you in the long term? Once you start to measure the real risks between sailing on the sea of solitude or sharing your story, you'll quickly start to find motivation to start the conversation. And talking isn't just good for you, it's good for the tribe (or, in modern terms, "the boys").

"Often it just takes one guy having the courage to 'go there' and open up, and the rest will follow," says Pienaar. "You really have to commit to knowing each other and choose to lean in and ask the hard questions. Don't settle for the good old, 'Ja no, I'm fine, hey'. Push past to what is lying underneath. Ask how [your friends] are really doing."

Through these interviews, talking to people like Ingel and Victor, I experienced a form of therapy, too. Journalistic intent drove the question: "How are you actually feeling?", and the answers were a reminder of the conversations I should be having every day. It showed me that we keep things surface-level because it's easy—small talk never rocks the boat. But it also leaves us feeling rudderless and alone with our problems. In isolation, we can trick ourselves into thinking that our problems are unique, but through conversations we can find a sense of place, solidarity and acceptance.

The answer is clear: we need to start talking, whether it's to a professional, a loved one or a friend. In short, it's time to pick up the phone.

Create a Crisis Plan

If you're experiencing distress, it can be difficult to think rationally. In these moments, life can feel overwhelming and hopeless opening the door to drastic decisions. Mapping out your own crisis plan can help you weather these challenging episodes, giving you the coordinates to navigate a challenging situation.**

1 Identify the Warning Signs

Are you isolating more? Struggling to stay interested in activities you used to enjoy? Are you trapped in a cycle of rumination or getting irritable with those around you? A proactive approach can help you spot the first signals of an impending problem before it turns into a crisis.

2 Find Coping Mechanisms

Keep a running list of healthy coping strategies that can help give you some breathing room. Taken literally, this could mean practising relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or mindfulness exercises. Alternatively, music, making art or playing videogames could provide a distraction and help lower your stress levels.

3 Identify Your Support System

Who can you talk to right now? While others might not understand what you're going through, reaching out can provide comfort—whether that's speaking to a friend, family member, or even joining a support group like AA. Research has shown that feeling connected (or even better: supported) can dramatically decrease distress.

4 Speak to a Professional

There are plenty of resources for those grappling with mental health struggles. For instance, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group has round-the-clock suicide crisis hotlines for those in desperate need of support. Sites such as the Therapist Directory (therapist-directory.co.za) can help connect you with a mental health professional in your area, too.

IMAGE: ZOLTAN TASI/UNSPLASH.COM

"OFTEN IT JUST TAKES ONE GUY HAVING THE COURAGE TO 'GO THERE' AND OPEN UP, AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW. YOU REALLY HAVE TO COMMIT TO KNOWING EACH OTHER AND CHOOSE TO LEAN IN AND ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS. DON'T SETTLE FOR THE GOOD OLD, 'JA NO, I'M FINE, HEY'. PUSH PAST TO WHAT IS LYING UNDERNEATH. ASK HOW YOUR FRIENDS ARE REALLY DOING."

NEED HELP? Reach out to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group:
Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0800 567 567
CIPLA Mental Health Helpline: 0800 456 789
Substance Abuse Helpline: 0800 12 13 14

CLIMB OUT OF ANY FORM OF MENTAL FUNK

18½ Ways to Boost Your Mental Strength

(That Don’t Involve *Bladdy* Meditation)

We’re fans of the big healthy-mind stuff —therapy, journalling, paying someone else to do your tax returns. But don’t overlook these little moves.

WORDS BY GINA LOVELESS • ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRISTINA DAURA

01-06

Relieve Anxiety

01/
Pay Attention

Anxiety is about the future (will I hit this deadline?) and the past (did I mess up in that meeting?). To anchor yourself to the present, former monk Jay Shetty, author of *Think Like A Monk*, recommends that you make a mental note of the following when your mind starts to race:

5 things you can see

4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

02/
Astound Yourself

Research has found that when you experience something awe-inducing, your own problems often seem less important. These Instagram accounts hit that.

■ **@babaktafreshi,** a National Geographic photographer who captures all the patterns and drama of the night sky.

■ **@markbotha,** a South African photographer who turns waves into jaw-dropping art.

03/
Step Out

A 90-minute walk in nature, if you're a city dweller, has been shown to reduce rumination or repetitive negative thoughts. Google Street View now lets you take a virtual hike through National Parks, nature reserves and Heritage Sites throughout SA. It's a good way to get a lay of the land before you set forth.

04/
Curb Your News Time

Browse headlines in the morning, but don't spend your day hitting refresh. In one study from the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, when students watched the news for only 15 minutes, it heightened anxiety and mood disturbance, unless immediately followed by a short relaxation exercise.

05/
Troubleshoot Pre-trouble

It's not worrying; it's strategising. If you prepare for difficulties and think about how to handle them, problems are less likely to throw you off, explains Dr. Emily Balcetis, an associate professor of psychology at New York University. Athletes do it—they train for how they'll recoup if they fumble a pass or drive a golf ball into the rough.

06/Use The 10-10-10 Rule

When you're in an anxiety whirlpool about a decision you need to make, Suzy Welch, author of the book *10-10-10*, recommends that you ask yourself what the consequences of your decision will be in:

10 minutes

10 months

10 years

This can keep your right-now emotions from ruling your decision, and can clarify your priorities —which lets you make a commitment and move on.

07-09

Release Frustration

MAKE STRIDES TOWARDS
A HEALTHIER MINDSET

07/

Check Your Mental Playlist

"What are the top five feelings on your emotional playlist?" asks Oren Jay Sofer, a meditation teacher who appears on the Ten Percent Happier app. Are you frustrated, angry, judgemental? Acknowledging what you are feeling and how often the feelings arise can help you see those emotions for what they are. And that can help you manage them.

08/

Hear People Out, Even When It's Hard

When you're dealing with someone difficult, tell them, "I hear you," says Bill Eddy, co-founder of High Conflict Institute. You don't have to say that they're right, but you should sincerely acknowledge their frustration, even if that's the opposite of what you want to do. Showing that you're listening can help to calm the situation down.

09 Less Predictable

A little change to your daily habits may lead to a happier life, suggests a study in *Nature Neuroscience*. Novelty drives dopamine release, which makes you feel good. Go small: try re-engineering your morning routine or walking a different route on your lunchbreak.

10-14

Make Connections

10/Book In for a Treatment

Not only will it work through those office aches, but a 15-minute back massage is enough to release the "bonding" or "cuddle" hormone, oxytocin, according to a study of 95 people by the University of California San Diego Medical Centre.

11/

Get Your Game On

Behaviour coach Mari Verano recommends collaborative games rather than competitive ones to build communication skills and camaraderie. Try the board game *Pandemic Legacy: Season One*—if the theme isn't too close to home.

12/

Diversify Your Listening Habits

"Listening to the voices of people from other backgrounds provides [you] with an important opportunity to better understand their experience," says psychotherapist Babita Spinelli. That elicits greater empathy, which helps you move to a more shared experience, understanding others and yourself in a new way. If you're in the habit of listening to the same five podcasts, try mixing things up by downloading a few that wouldn't normally make it into your regular rotation; stories from people of other races, genders or simply those with life experiences very different from your own can be eye-opening.

13/

Give a Little (Or a Lot)

It's well-documented that doing good things for others can make you feel good yourself. "It can alleviate anxiety, depression and pain," says Dr. Leela Magavi of Community Psychiatry in California. Here are a few ways to make a difference—that won't cost you a thing:

▪ Take a day off.

Some companies offer a discretionary extra day of annual leave for employees who want to work for charitable causes. If yours does, take advantage. If it doesn't, propose it.

▪ Next, find a cause.

Government pages often list a range of causes that are searching for volunteers. Alternatively, think about something you're passionate about. Is it helping animals? The SPCA could be good place to start.

▪ Or start donating.

Visit forgood.co.za to find orgs, schools and charities in need of donations. Whether it's old goods, food drives or just your Randelas, these donations can make a real difference.

14/

Discover What Makes Wellbeing Work

Log in to online-learning treasure trove Coursera for the Science of Well-Being class, offered by Yale. Taught by psychologist Professor Laurie Santos, it's the most popular class in the university's 300-year history. One highlight: identifying and building on your character strengths via a test at viacharacter.org. It ranks all 24 strengths, and Santos recommends looking at your top 10 and choosing one, such as kindness or curiosity. Each day for the following week, try to use this strength in a new way.

15 - 18.5

Build

15/

Sleep Less —For a While

If you're having a hard time getting shuteye, reset your system by cutting your sleep window to between five-and-a-half and seven hours a night, suggests psychotherapist Annie Miller. This will help to get your sleep drive working once more. When you start falling asleep more easily, gradually increase your time in bed. (But if it's bedtime and you're not feeling tired, don't try to sleep.)

16/

Get Dreamy

If you can't get back to sleep in the middle of the night, try to remember a dream, suggests Dr. Rubin Naiman of the University of Arizona Centre for Integrative Medicine. Recalling a dream helps you let go of wakefulness or "daytime consciousness". According to Dr. Naiman, "The memory of a dream will take you into dream consciousness, and then you're on the bridge to sleep."

17 (&½)/

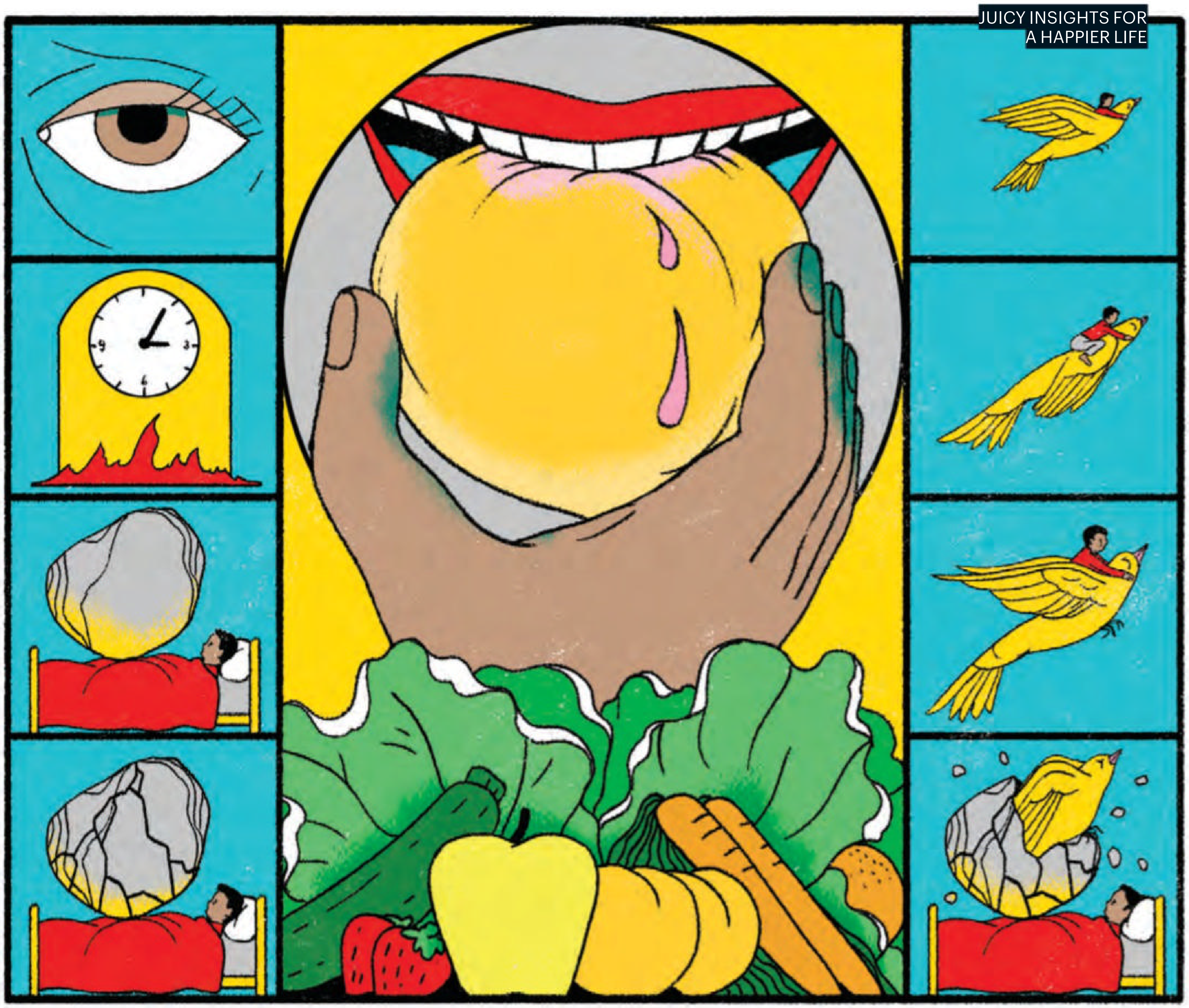
Develop a Sweet Disposition

Research suggests the average adult only manages 3.7 portions of fruit and veg per day. It's a sorry statistic given a 2020 *Nutrients* review of studies found that eating more fruits and vegetables may protect against depressive symptoms and boost optimism. Raising this total by a portion and a half could give your wellbeing a notable boost.

Resilience

18/Tell Someone How You Really Are

Designer Kenneth Cole is betting it's been a while since you told someone how you really are, which is why he and a coalition of mental health orgs launched howareyoureally.org, an initiative to get people talking about mental health. There, you can watch testimonials from mental health resource providers, celebrities and many others discussing mental health, and add your story.



The 23 Biggest Health & Fitness Trends Of 2023

It's that time of year again, when *MH* gazes into its crystal ball—or, rather, calls upon a roster of industry insiders—to compile a definitive list of the health and fitness trends set to change the game in the months to come. Take note, this is how you're going to be shaping up

WORDS BY SCARLETT WRENCH & MH STAFF

08 You'll Embrace Dehydration! →

01_

Meat-Free Will Equal Flavourful

No longer fated to choose between dry bean burgers and strange soy concoctions, vegans will be treated to a veritable charcuterie board of options. Beyond Burgers, for instance, pack intense umami flavour and manage to eerily (but not unsatisfyingly) replicate the texture of biting into the real deal. Plus, they'll even sizzle just like their bovine equivalents when they hit the pan. They're just part of a new wave of guilt-free, vegan alternatives cropping up everywhere—your favourite burger joint included—so meat-free will no longer be code for "this'll do... I guess". You can grab a pack of Beyond Burger patties at Woolworths for R130.

02_

You'll Hack Your Stress Levels

■ Meditation apps? Those were just the start... This year, expect to see an influx of new tech targeted at the mental ills of modern life. The wrist-worn Apollo Neuro is designed to improve resilience to stress by delivering gentle vibration waves based on breathing patterns, which disrupt the nervous system. Or there's NuCalm, which uses "neuroacoustic software" (tones at specific frequencies) to promote relaxation, supposedly providing the benefits of two hours' sleep within 30 minutes. Just don't take it as an excuse to squeeze in an extra hour on Twitter.

03_

You Won't Need To Be Elite To Compete

■ Muscled 25-year-olds will be the minority at fitness comps. Almost three-quarters of racers at global sensation Hyrox are over 30, with an impressive 8% in the 50-plus band. Intimidated by the full event? Provided you're willing to jet off to one of Hyrox's European venues, there's now an easier four-person relay option, as well as Hyrox Gym Tour taster sessions. For the 2022 season, CrossFit introduced its new "Levels" concept: a numeric representation of athletes' ability that makes it easier to find and compete against equal matches. On the running side, many iconic ultras will let you opt for condensed versions of their lengthy routes and your times will usually be tabulated against guys in similar age ranges. Even smaller events now let you tweak your distances, too, so you can go 10km (not 50km).

04_

Instructors Will Put The Emo In EMOM

■ Whether or not you subscribe to the idea of gym as therapy, the two will become interconnected. Mental wellbeing is a rising motivator for training, says luxury health club Third Space's CEO Colin Waggett. "It used to be quite low in the pecking order. Now 40% of our members state mental health as a reason for them joining." Olivia Houghton, the Foresight Editor at the Future Laboratory, highlights a trend for workouts centred on emotional health ("Alexa, search 'yoga for stress release'"), while fitness instructors are repurposing the language of therapy ("Self-care isn't selfish!"). In the US, Coa is the first "emotional fitness studio", delivering therapeutic classes via a traditional gym model. "In the future, we could witness a fitness culture that is less centred on physical optimisation and instead functions more as a space for self-expression," posits Houghton.

05_

Your Self-Talk Will Get Softer

Sweat is just fat crying, bro!
GYM BRO'BOT

■ Some people thrive on a bit of no-BS gym banter. Others, however, prefer friendly encouragement to PE teacher admonishments. Circuit Society's founder Shane Collins has noted—and welcomes—a move away from excessively punishing language ("Pain is weakness leaving the body!") as well as the assumption that gym attendees are motivated by a desire to lose weight—although that's still a valid goal, he says. Meanwhile, the burgeoning anti-body-shaming movement (see Jonah Hill) is gathering momentum, while fitness influencer Joey Swoll saw his audience explode last year, thanks to his videos calling out those who are disrespectful to less experienced gym-goers.

06_

Greenwashers Will Clean Up

■ Nearly half of us agree that the wellness industry's greenwashing (presenting a veneer of eco friendliness, without efforts to back it up) is noticeable, reports The Pull Agency. Houghton predicts that we'll see more companies "investing heavily in natural capital", such as funding regeneration projects. Damian Soong, co-founder of plant-based supp brand Form, whose company is a B Corp, says some health brands are "exploiting conscious consumers" and advises shoppers to look for mentions of reputable organisations.

07_

You'll Spoil A Good Walk

■ Golf has seen an upswing in a younger demographic; since the beginning of the pandemic, the average age of golfers has decreased by five years. "We're seeing more brands and clients seeking to cater to the growing number of golfers," says Kate Burton, founder of Fittest PR. Ahmed's Whoop is a partner of the PGA Tour, while functional fitness apparel brand Nobull now has its own golfwear range. Younger pros in the sport approach the game differently, with more of a focus on the work that goes on in the gym. Expect to see golf-focused conditioning workouts cropping up in your go-to workout apps over the next 365.

08_

You'll Embrace Dehydration

■ Not hugely dissimilar in presentation to the novelty freeze-dried "astronaut food" of your childhood, dehydrated meals will join your refuelling roster, along with the usual shakes and bars. British brand and the OG of powdered meals, Huel, has a just-add-water range that includes Thai green curry and mac and "cheeze", while Protein Works' SuperMeals include an optimised tikka masala. While import costs are steep, you can expect local brands to branch out from chocolate and vanilla offerings soon enough.

→

09_

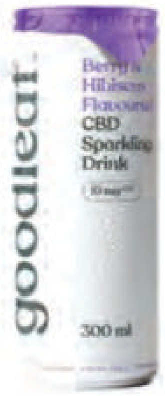
The Cycling Renaissance Will Pick Up Its Pace

■ The global bicycle market is projected to reach almost R1.6 trillion by 2028. Why the sudden surge? Researchers at Mintel, point to a trend for "fake commutes" where the WFH crowd use runs and rides to bookend their workdays. With climate concerns and unaffordable travel costs, the #bikelife movement is likely to gather speed. But what's all this hype about e-bikes? These rides leverage the power of battery-powered "pedal assist" to give each spin extra spark. You'll expend less effort and go further, turning challenging terrain into an easy ride. However, while these bikes might be great for the commute, a report published in *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* found that e-bikers were 44% less likely to reach their weekly fitness targets than the traditionalists.

10_

Soft Drinks Will Make You Effervescent

■ In 2023, you'll drink to remember, not to forget. So-called "functional drinks"—targeted at brain function, mood and general health—are rising in popularity. Goodleaf's range of sparkling drinks are infused with CBD to provide anxiety relief during the workday or help you calm down when the clock strikes downtime (among many other advertised benefits). Bonus: they contain zero calories, so you can sip freely. The addition of adaptogens to a new range of health drinks could give you a quick mental boost with the pop of a tab.



11_

You'll HIIT Closer To Home

■ In 2021, an estimated 50% of the SA workforce was clocking in remotely. Collins says the wave of WFH warriors might lead to our daily lives becoming "more community based". "Increasingly, people will want to work, eat, shop and train within walking distance from their house. That flips the studio fitness market on its head." He predicts a rise in "micro-studios": friendly neighbourhood fitness spaces with small class sizes (something gym owners can more easily afford when not renting space in the big SA metros). As the city exodus continues, you should expect to see more local spots popping up in the suburbs.

12_

Cardio's Popularity Will Gain Momentum

■ It's unsurprising that the pandemic saw an uptick in outdoor exercise such as hiking, running and cycling. But even now the squat rack is back in business, "those activities have continued to be among the most-logged by Whoop members", says Will Ahmed, the company's founder. Cardio is gaining ground in the gym, too. "We've noted that classes using equipment such as air bikes, SkiErgs, treadmills, etc, are more popular, as they can't be replicated at home," says Waggett. Meanwhile, streaming service Fiit is busy adding Assault Bike, treadmill, rowing and spin sessions to its roster.

13_

You'll Sweat In The Metaverse

The Future Laboratory predicts a rise in virtual wellness events, pointing to Metabike as an example: a home fitness bike that lets users earn Cardio Points, which can be exchanged for brand discounts. Early last year, fitness giant Les Mills launched its Bodycombat VR app, which fused real-world trainers with virtual reality so players can hone their martial arts skills in intergalactic deserts. One of their events has also been turned into an immersive experience. The Global Wellness Institute's research director Beth McGroarty says the fitness industry will give the "still conceptual, largely unrealised" metaverse early momentum. The proof? One of Meta's first moves was to buy VR fitness app Supernatural.

15_

Your Outfits Will Get Smarter

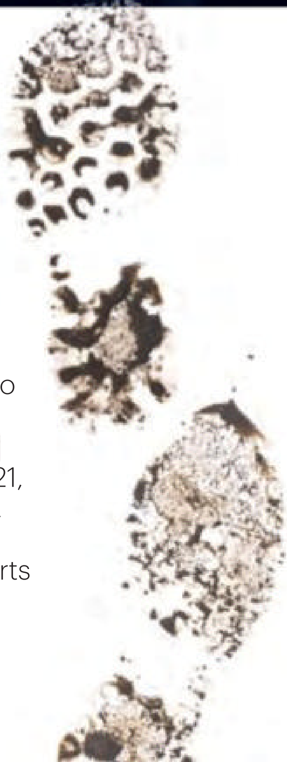
"Wearable technology should either look cool or be invisible," says Ahmed, whose sensor-enabled apparel range Whoop Body launched late last year. Next, he plans to incorporate the health- and activity-tracking tech into other brands. ("We've got collaborations in the works...") US startup Asensei weaves motion-capture tech into "connected coaching" kit that counts your reps and takes note of your form, while British brand Kymira's kit is made using "infrared-embedded fabrics", which help your body produce blood flow-boosting nitric oxide. Or, for something a little less techie, Omorpho has a new range of "micro-weighted apparel" to make your body-weight efforts that little bit sweatier.

WHOOP
WHOOP

14_

Outdoor Fitness Will Flourish

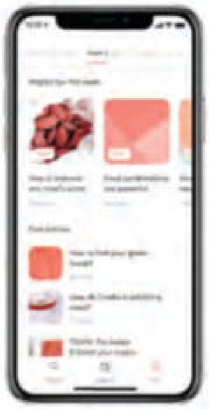
Gym closures in 2020 led to a steep rise in the number of recreational ramblers (one[redacted] four of us, up from 16% in 2021, according to a Mintel report), while a worldwide survey by the American College of Sports Medicine rated it the third biggest trend for 2022. This year, things are likely to get even wilder, as adventure fitness—or "quasi-mountaineering", if you like—is a trend that's "going from strength to strength", says *MH* UK's fitness editor Andrew Tracey. "From rucks through the forest in weighted vests to weekend trips to the [lake] and Instagram posts with captions like, 'What's the point of being strong in the gym if you don't use it?'"



16_

You'll Track More Than Just Fitness

Calories and mileage? Mere entry-level metrics. "We're getting more requests for features related to heart health," notes Ahmed; expect to see trackers offering additional insights into respiratory rate and blood oxygen. There's also a rising demand for at-home blood, urine and, erm, faeces tests. Professor Tim Spector's service Zoe—which scores foods according to their impact on biomarkers such as blood fats—had a waiting list of 220k people. McGroarty also points to new start-ups offering male fertility tests, including Bird&Be, Zava and Kindly.



17_

You'll Join Exclusive Clubs

While training at home has its perks, those lone-wolf hours sweating over tin or tarmac have left many of us craving human connection. No surprise, then, that running clubs are rising in popularity, giving you an opportunity to rack up steps while forging solidarity. Most meet weekly, and some even organise activities outside of chasing kilometres. Adidas Runners, for instance, has different groups based on your fitness level and training goals. Want to prep for Two Oceans? There's a group for that. Test the waters with a few different clubs so that you find the perfect fit. You can see a directory of groups throughout South Africa by heading over to *runningclubs.co.za*.

18_

Recovery Will Be Your New Sport

Pro athletes have long known that recovery is as integral to performance as graft in the gym. "Now regular fitness-seekers are educating themselves on mobility training, myofascial release and corrective exercises," says Fittest PR's Burton. Stats from sportswatch makers Garmin show that Pilates, breathwork and yoga are the fastest-growing activities among users, while the popular mobility app Pliability (formerly Romwod) recently rebranded to extend its remit beyond CrossFit. Recovery tools from brands such as Hyperice and Therabody are already popping up in gyms' designated "recovery zones".

19_

Gyms Will Be Social Hubs

"Gyms have created an avenue for social connection that serves people who'd otherwise be forced into drinking and 'going out-out' when they don't truly want to," says Tracey. An increasing number of spaces are looking to boost their footfall through events such as talks, competitions and workouts soundtracked by live DJ sets. For instance, our Gym of the Month for this issue, The Armoury, stages regular fight nights complete with all the fanfare that usually accompanies the pay-per-view spectacles on your TV screen. Alternatively, CrossFit boxes are leaning heavily into the social aspects of every session. Many gyms are also turning their spaces into all-in-ones for work, workout and play. Even fitness retailers are placing kit sales second to customer "experiences", including group workouts and seminars.

20_

You'll Try What's Tested

"The wellness consumer emerging from the pandemic is very different from the consumer of 2019," says McGroarty, who points to a trend of cautiousness and away from trend-led solutions. "People are demanding more evidence and credible experts. And brands are dialling down the absurd wellness marketing claims." Probiotic company Seed has its own scientific board, populated by doctors and researchers, while personalised supp company Viome advertises its work with experts at Harvard, Stanford and MIT. Soong's Form has two resident nutrition consultants. Just watch out for "medical-washing", in which evidence of efficacy is overstated.

21_

You'll Detox Your Digital Life. For Real This Time

Our potential for internet addiction has been a concern for more than two decades (psychologist Dr. Kimberly Young wrote the cautionary guide *Caught In The Net* in 1998). But when a man such as Joe Wicks—who built his empire off the back of social media—announces to his 4.5m Insta followers that his phone is "the source of almost every single negative emotion I feel", it's a sign that a break is needed.

This year, we'll see a rise in the use of social media-blocking apps such as Freedom, and an increased interest in wifi-free holidays. Fortunately, in SA, getting off the grid is relatively easy: just head for a far-flung reserve and let the digital detox begin. However, if you need a little help, "phone lock boxes" are readily available (and affordable) and have timers that will bar you from engaging in any screentime.

22_

You'll Take On The Ice Barrel Challenge

Among serious health nerds, ice baths have been cool for a while, but the next 12 months will see the mainstream fitness-sphere awash with them. Last year introduced cold-water guru Wim Hof to a new audience with the BBC's reality show *Freeze The Fear*, while a tub full of ice cubes in the back garden is the latest home-gym flex for Instagram fitness influencers. Harry Styles is a convert, too. Want to give this a go yourself? Your bath tub will do. Just fill it halfway with cold water and ice (two or three bags should do the trick). Just a five minute soak should yield results, just don't exceed 15.

23_

You'll Fuel Up With Pinpoint Accuracy

"There is an emphasis on using personal data to adopt a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to health," says Burton. Tracking blood glucose is an area of interest. Continuous glucose monitors (CGM) have evolved beyond tools to manage diabetes, entering consumer wellness. Levels Health (a US-based comapny) leverages CGM tech to give real-time insights into how your diet affects your metabolic health. Newcomers Ultrahuman have released a metabolism-tracking ring which, as well as offering the usual fitness metrics, works with the brand's glucose-monitoring platform to give detailed data.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS: PHOTOGRAPHY: PATRICE DE VILLIERS | ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: HYROX; JOBE LAWRENSON; STUDIO 33; CHARLIE SURBEY; PHILIP HAYNES; PASCO PHOTOGRAPHY: BBC/HUNGRY BEAR MEDIA/PETE DADDS; COURTESY OF LEVEL; SUN LEE

THESE HIGH-PROTEIN FEASTS WILL MAKE YOU COCK OF THE WALK

28 Ways To Turn Chicken Into Muscle

When it comes to fuelling your efforts in the gym, poultry is the ultimate wingman. But by focusing only on the leanest meat in its plainest form, you're missing out on vital nutrients—not to mention flavour. Spread your culinary wings with this flock of nutritious, protein-rich feasts, compiled by some of the world's most exciting chefs. It's time to teach the old bird some new tricks

WORDS BY SCARLETT WRENCH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROWAN FEE

01

The Best Chicken Burger You'll Ever Eat

Without wishing to ruffle feathers, protein needn't always be pious. The Disco Sandwich—created by Carl Clarke, co-founder of Chick'N'Sours—serves up 40g of the good stuff in a truly irresistible package.

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 4)

- 500ML BUTTERMILK
- 4 BONELESS THIGHS, SKIN ON
- 1 LARGE EGG
- 120ML MILK
- 165G FLOUR
- VEGETABLE OIL, FOR DEEP-FRYING
- 2 VERY RIPE AVOCADOS
- JUICE OF 2 LIMES
- 1 TBSP CHOPPED CORIANDER
- 8 SLICES OF DRY-CURED STREAKY BACON
- 4 BRIOCHE ROLLS
- HOT SAUCE (SEE P.91)
- 4 CHEDDAR CHEESE SLICES
- 2 TBSP PINK PICKLED ONIONS
- 2 TBSP MAYONNAISE (IDEALLY JAPANESE KEWPIE)

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Clarke, author of *The Whole Chicken*, is on a quest to perfect the art of the chicken burger. This recipe has it all: crispy chicken, heat from the chilli sauce, cooling avocado and acidity from pickled onions. Whisk the buttermilk with 1 tsp of salt in a shallow bowl. Add the thighs, cover with cling wrap and pop in the fridge for 12 to 24 hrs.

02 Ready to go? Whisk the egg and milk and set aside. For the coating, blend the flour with 1 tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper. Remove the thighs from the brine and shake off the excess buttermilk. Lightly dip in the flour mix, then submerge in the wet mix. Dredge back into the flour and work it in with your hands to create an almost cornflake-like texture.

03 Heat about 2L of oil for frying (use a deep fat fryer or a large saucepan with the oil heated to 140°C). Fry the thighs in pairs for 7 mins, then set aside. Up the oil temperature to 180°C. Deep fry again for 3 to 4 mins until golden brown, then drain on paper towels.

04 To build the burgers, mix the avo flesh with lime juice and coriander, then season. Grill the bacon. Halve the rolls, brush with butter and toast under a grill or face down in a hot, dry pan. Spread the avo on the base of each roll and top with a chicken thigh, hot sauce, a cheese slice, 2 slices of bacon and pickled onions. Spread a little mayo on the lid of the bread roll and close it up. Trust us: this recipe rules the roost.

23g OF PROTEIN, COMPARED WITH 17G IN A MCCHICKEN SANDWICH

KEEP SOME SKIN IN THE GAME FOR A CRISP HIT OF PROTEINS AND FATS

02-04

What's on the Outside Counts

Stripped chicken breasts might be the gym bro's go-to, but it's worth saving your skin—it's a surprising source of recovery-boosting selenium, plus useful proteins and fats, and far tastier than you might think. Make the most of it with Clarke's chicken-skin crispies.

HOW TO MAKE IT

Place your pieces of skin, cut to about 10cm in length, on a chopping board and scrape off excess fat from the inside with a sharp chef's knife. Line a baking tray with parchment, then lay the pieces of skin on the tray, smoothing out the creases and leaving a small gap in between each. Season with sea salt. Top with another sheet of parchment and pop a flat baking tray on top, pressing to flatten. Roast at 180°C for about 50 mins until golden brown (keep watch—if the skin overcooks it becomes bitter), then pop on a wire rack. It will crisp up as it cools.

REMIX IT

Throw the skins in a salad with baby gem lettuce, blue cheese, crispy bacon and pickled apple. **Enjoy as a cracker-style snack with sour cream and pineapple jam, or homemade hummus and chilli oil.** Or use to top pad Thai, crushed, along with roasted peanuts, to give your dish some extra crunch.

05-08

Chicken Soup for the Swole

Don't throw away your Sunday roast carcass—there are useful proteins and minerals hidden within, not to mention plenty of recovery-boosting collagen. Instead, use it to concoct this frugal yet delicious soup.

The power of chicken soup—aka Jewish penicillin—to nourish, comfort, strengthen and cure is legendary. Quite literally, in fact, for its secrets and ingredients invariably differ depending on who you ask. Despite its association with Ashkenazi Jewish culture, some claim that the origins lie in ancient Greece, or even China. Many, if not most, Jewish people will cite their grandparents' recipe as the definitive. Some include gamier "boiling fowl"; others insist on the best chicken you can buy. But the one thing on which all can agree is that the most important ingredients are love, time and care.

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 6)

- LEFTOVER CARCASS OR BONES
- 1KG CHICKEN WINGS AND/OR DRUMSTICKS
- 3 CARROTS, PEELED AND ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 1 PARSNIP, PEELED AND ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 3 CELERY STICKS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
- 2 SKIN-ON ONIONS, QUARTERED
- 1 BAY LEAF
- 1 HANDFUL PARSLEY STALKS
- 1 TBSP PEPPERCORNS

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Pop your carcass and chicken pieces into a large saucepan along with the veg. Cover with water and bring to a very slow boil, skimming any white foam off the top.

02 Once it's been simmering for about 1½ hrs, remove from the heat. Take out the bird and pick off all the meat before setting aside, along with the veg. Strain the broth through a sieve and return it to the cooking pot, along with the carcass. Cook for another one hour, then strain again.

03 Refrigerate overnight, then scoop the rendered fat (schmaltz) off the top—it's full of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. For a traditional Jewish soup, warm the broth and serve with matzah balls, chopped carrots, torn chicken meat and fresh parsley. Or use the broth for one of the recipe ideas below.

REMIX IT

Sweat an onion in butter, then add a tin of sweetcorn. Blend this with the broth and top with basil. **Combine with onion, garlic, thyme, rosemary and 100g of bacon for an extra 17g of protein.** For a nutrient superboost, add Brussels sprout leaves, spinach and crushed chestnuts.

09

Play the Organs

Offal is an unsung superfood, as Angelo Sato—chef-owner of yakitori bar Humble Chicken (which offers more than 17 different cuts)—knows well. Both this miso liver recipe and his one on **p.90** can be served with steamed sticky white rice.

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 2-3)

- 300G CHICKEN LIVERS
- 50G CORNFLOUR
- 50G SESAME OIL
- BLACK AND WHITE SESAME SEEDS, TOASTED
- 4 SPRING ONIONS

FOR THE MISO SAUCE

- 100G MISO
- 30G GOCHUJANG PASTE
- 15G SOYA SAUCE
- 10G SUGAR
- 20G HONEY
- 10G GINGER, GRATED
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE, GRATED
- ¼ APPLE, GRATED

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 To make the sauce, put everything in a pot along with 100ml water and simmer for 25 to 30 mins. Stir, scraping the bottom of the pan every couple of mins to make sure it doesn't burn. (While it simmers, prep the scallions: slice as thin as possible and soak in ice water for 20 mins before patting dry.) Remove the sauce after 30 mins and leave to cool.

02 Rinse the livers and pat dry. Season the cornflour and dust the livers, shaking off excess flour. Heat the sesame oil on high in a non-stick pan and add the livers. Liver is packed with B vits, which help your body turn food into energy. Sauté for 60 secs each side, then reduce the heat and coat with the sauce. Simmer for 3 mins.

03 When cooked, plate up and spoon over the sauce. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and spring onions to garnish.

10-15

Stretch Your Sunday Roast

Master the art of waste-free cooking by learning to prep in bulk. Perfect your roast with this recipe from butchers Parson's Nose, then adapt your leftovers for a week's worth of meals. Keep your health in check on the cheap.

240g

OF PROTEIN IN A SMALLISH BIRD, WERE YOU TO FINISH IT

SUNDAY

A Whole Lotta Bird

INGREDIENTS

- A 1.6KG CHICKEN
- 2 ONIONS, CHOPPED
- 2 CARROTS, CHOPPED
- GARLIC BULB, BROKEN UP
- 2 TBSP OLIVE OIL
- LARGE SPRIG OF ROSEMARY
- 1 TBSP SMOKED SALT
- 250G BUTTER
- 1 ORANGE, QUARTERED
- 1 LEMON, QUARTERED

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Soak your bird in 3L tepid water with sugar and salt. Refrigerate for 6 to 12 hrs.

02 Dry the chicken 1 hr before roasting. Coat the vegetables in oil. Mix the rosemary and salt into the butter. Rub the chicken with butter and stuff the fruit into its cavity.

03 Pop the bird on the veg on a tray, then cover with foil and roast at 180°C for 20 mins. Remove the foil; roast for 35 mins. Don't eat it all tonight.

MONDAY

Afternoon Spring Rolls

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 2)

- 250G COOKED CHICKEN
- 4 RICE PAPER WRAPPERS
- 1 CARROT, GRATED
- 2 SPRING ONIONS, SLICED
- HANDFUL OF BEANSPROUTS
- CORIANDER AND MINT, TO TASTE

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 TBSP FISH SAUCE
- 2 TBSP LIME JUICE
- 1 TSP RUNNY HONEY

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Get creative for an afternoon snack that beats any protein bar. Dip the wrappers in hot water one at a time and lay them on a damp tea towel.

02 Leaving a 2cm border around the edges, stuff the rolls with your other ingredients, then wrap them up like parcels.

03 Pop the rolls in some Tupperware, then pour the sauce ingredients into a bottle. Shake to mix. Break these out when post-lunch cravings threaten your resolve.

TUESDAY

Pesto Protein Strips

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 4)

- 400G COOKED CHICKEN
- HANDFUL OF BASIL
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE, GRATED
- 25G PINE NUTS
- 25G FRESHLY GRATED PARMESAN
- 100ML OLIVE OIL
- 400G CHERRY TOMATOES
- 2 MOZZARELLA BALLS, TORN

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 First, the pesto. Blitz the basil, garlic, pine nuts and parmesan, adding oil to form a paste. Season to taste—with more cheese, if you prefer.

02 Tear the chicken into strips, coat it in pesto and lay it in a dish. Top it with the tomatoes and cheese (mozzarella packs a helpful 12g of protein per serving).

03 Bake at 180°C for 10 mins until the cheese melts. Serve with salad and balsamic vinegar, or tagliatelle if you're in need of workout fuel.

WEDNESDAY
Moroccan Muscle

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 4)

- 400G COOKED CHICKEN
- 1 ONION, SLICED
- DASH OF OIL
- 1 RED CHILLI, CHOPPED
- ½ BUTTERNUT, DICED
- 2 TBSP CURRY POWDER
- 1 TBSP ROSE HARISSA
- 50G DRIED APRICOTS, CHOPPED
- 50G FLAKED ALMONDS
- 1 TIN OF TOMATOES
- 2 TBSP RUNNY HONEY

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Feed your muscles after a heavy session with a simple tagine. Start by frying the onion until it's browned, then add everything else except for the chicken and honey.

02 Mix well, then cover with a lid. Let it bubble for 10 to 15 mins, until the squash softens.

03 Finally, add the torn chicken and the honey and cook for a few mins. Serve with bulgur wheat and coriander for a perfect blend of carbs, protein and vitamins that will have you primed to perform well tomorrow.

THURSDAY
Curry Night Upgrade

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 2)

- 200G COOKED CHICKEN
- ½ ONION, FINELY SLICED
- ½ RED PEPPER, FINELY SLICED
- 1 GARLIC CLOVE
- CHUNK OF GINGER
- 1½ TBSP MADRAS PASTE
- SWEET POTATO, CHOPPED
- 200ML COCONUT MILK
- 2 TSP PEANUT BUTTER

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Skip the supermarket ready meals and and make your own. Soften the onion, pepper, garlic and ginger in a pan. Add the curry paste and stir.

02 Add the potato chunks, followed by the coconut milk for a hit of healthy fats. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 5 to 10 mins until the spuds have softened.

03 To finish, add the chicken and peanut butter and warm it all up. Serve with basmati and a chilled lager. It's almost the end of the week, after all.

FRIDAY
Light & Lean Pho

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 2)

- 200G COOKED CHICKEN
- 1L FRESH STOCK
- ½ ONION, SLICED
- 120G RICE NOODLES (DRY WEIGHT)
- 1 TBSP FISH SAUCE
- 1 TBSP LIGHT SOYA SAUCE
- 50G RAW BEANSPROUTS

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Spare yourself the graft and line your stomach with this soup you can prep in moments. Bring the stock to a boil, add the onion and simmer for 6 mins.

02 Add the noodles and chicken. Don't avoid the dark meat; it's marginally higher in calories but full of micronutrients. Once the noodles have softened, add the sauces.

03 Divide into bowls and garnish with coriander, fresh red chilli and a big squeeze of lime juice.

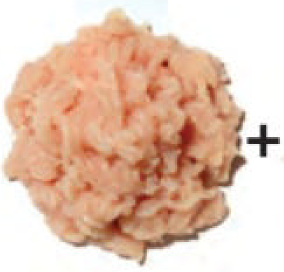
x3

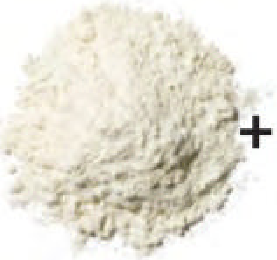
SOYA, GARLIC AND ONIONS PROVIDE A TRIPLE HIT OF PREBIOTICS FOR DIGESTION

16-24
Choose the Nugg Life

Because you can't dine under the Golden Arches every day, we've created this lean nugget matrix to help you switch up your home efforts. Quinoa salad or supersized fries? We'll leave that one with you...

The Base


+
Minced chicken
500g


+
Flour
80g

+
An egg

Breadcrumbs
100g

9
DIFFERENT COMBOS, WITH 30G PROTEIN PER PLATE

The Boost

Coriander + grated onion

Parsley + lemon zest

Rosemary + garlic

The Kick

Ancho chilli + cumin

Chilli flakes + soya sauce

Paprika + cinnamon

METHOD

01 It's time to get your hands dirty—but start by washing them. Bulk out your minced chicken with ¾ cup of one of the three boosters, plus 1 tbsp of your chosen spice blend. Knead the mixture together, mould it into nugget-sized balls and refrigerate for 30 mins.

02 When you're ready to cook, take the balls out of the fridge and roll each in flour, then dip in the beaten egg and add the breadcrumbs. Flatten the nuggets into an oval shape.

03 Finally, bake them in the oven at 180°C for 15 to 20 mins or until they're golden. Tuck in with salad, pita or—if you're a nugget traditionalist—chips.

GET TO THE HEART OF THE BIRD AND YOUR T LEVELS WILL THANK YOU

25
Have Some Heart

A great source of zinc, which helps to maintain healthy testosterone levels, chicken hearts are far too good to go to waste. Chase the pump with this heart skewer and tare sauce recipe from Humble Chicken's Angelo Sato.

INGREDIENTS
(SERVES 2)

- 30 CHICKEN HEARTS
- 10G SESAME OIL
- CHIVES, FINELY CHOPPED
- DIJON MUSTARD, TO SERVE

FOR THE TARE SAUCE

- 100G SAKE
- 30G DARK SOYA
- 20G LIGHT SOYA
- 15G SUGAR
- 30G MIRIN
- 20G GLUCOSE

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Start with the sauce: combine everything in a saucepan and slowly reduce over a low heat until it coats the back of a spoon. Remove and leave to cool.

02 Butterfly the hearts by slicing down the middle and spreading them open. Rinse the insides with cold water and pat dry. Slide the butterflied hearts on to 18cm bamboo skewers, 5 to 6 per skewer, and season with salt and pepper.

03 Heat a dash of sesame oil in a non-stick pan and add the skewers, sautéing for 2 mins each side. Take the pan off the heat and let it cool for 30 secs. Add your tare sauce, return to a low heat and gently glaze the skewers for another 30 secs. Garnish with chives and mustard.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL HEDGE; STUDIO 33

26-27

Let Your Gains Take Flight

Bored of breast meat? Update your birds-to-biceps formula with these finger-lickin' wings recipes from Chick'N'Sours' Clarke—perfect for your post-training refuel

30g+
OF USEFUL PROTEIN PER FOUR-WING SERVING

INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 6-10)

- 2KG JOINTED CHICKEN WINGS (ASK YOUR BUTCHER TO DO THIS)
- 4 TBSP BAKING POWDER
- 3 TBSP SEA SALT

FOR THE HOT SAUCE

- 1KG SCOTCH BONNET CHILLIES, DESEEDED
- 1KG LONG RED CHILLIES, DESEEDED
- 50G DRIED CHIPOTLE CHILLIES
- 250G CHOPPED GARLIC
- 1 TSP ALLSPICE
- 2 STAR ANISE
- 2L CIDER VINEGAR
- 250G BUTTER
- 2 TBSP CORNFLOUR

FOR THE STICKY SAUCE

- 250ML APPLE JUICE
- 250ML APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
- 250G DARK BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TBSP COARSE GROUND PEPPER
- 125G COLD UNSALTED BUTTER, CUT INTO CUBES
- 1 TBSP CORNFLOUR

HOW TO MAKE IT

01 Combine the baking powder and salt and coat the wings, tossing for an even dusting. Place the wings on a rack inside a roasting tray, leaving a small gap between each so air can circulate. Cook on the middle shelf of the oven at 180°C for 30 mins, then move to the top shelf and up the temperature to 250°C for 10 to 15 mins until crispy. Toss in one of the two sauces (see recipes, below and right), then dig in.

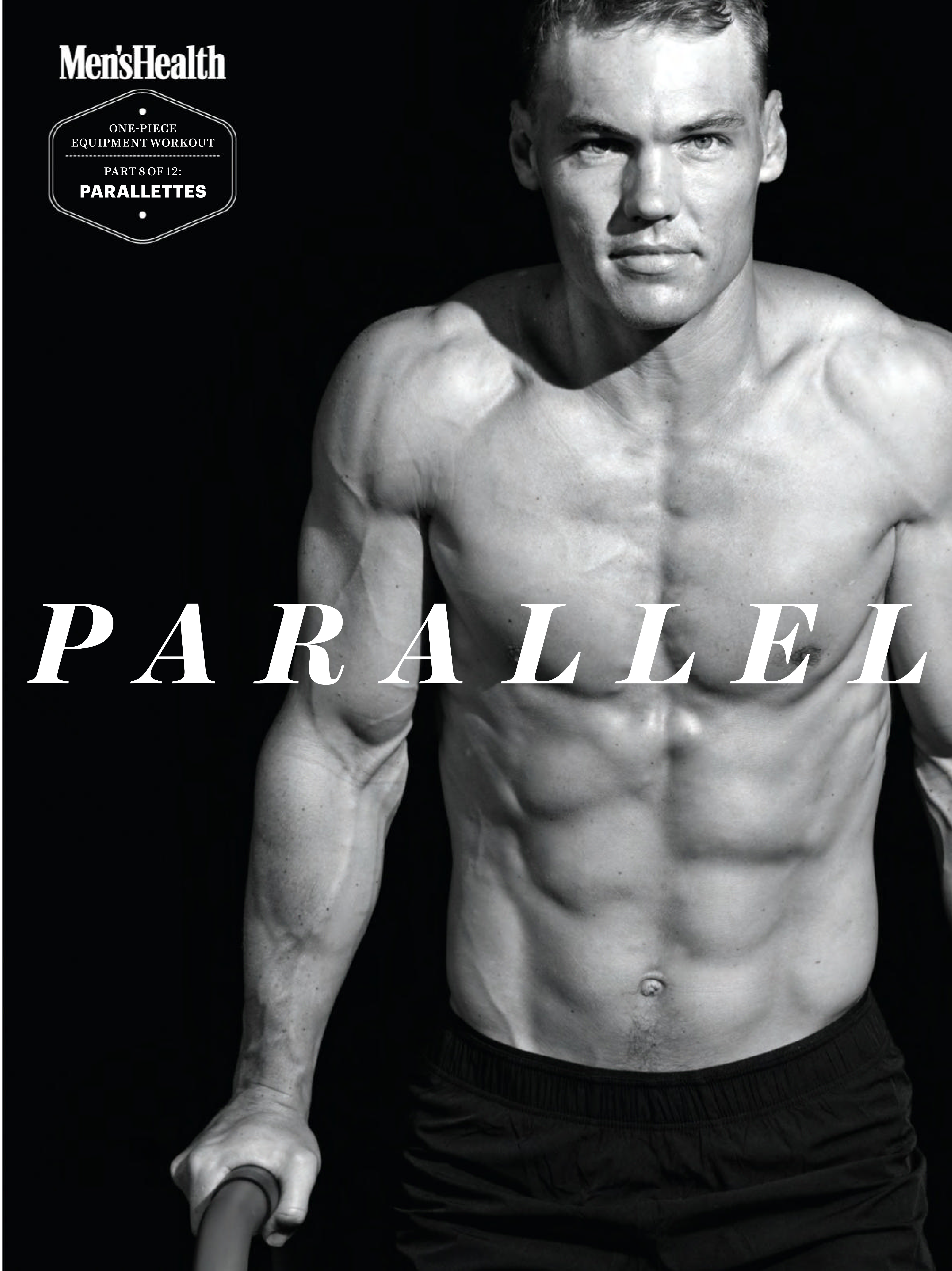
02 Like it hot? You might need goggles and disposable gloves for this one—Scotch bonnets are no joke. Place everything apart from the butter and cornflour in a pan with 1L water and simmer for 20 to 30 mins. Remove the star anise, transfer to a blender and blitz until smooth. Return to the pan and whisk in the butter. Add a splash of water to the cornflour to make a paste and use that to thicken the sauce, stirring until it coats the back of a spoon.

03 Like it sticky? "Use the best cider vinegar you can find—it makes all the difference," says Clarke. Cook the juice, vinegar and sugar in a saucepan over a medium heat for 10 mins until reduced by half. Turn off the heat, add the pepper and stir in the butter. Mix a little cornflour with a little water in a bowl. Heat the sauce very gently then, once hot, stir in the cornflour paste to thicken. You're gonna need some napkins...

28

The Best Bit of All

A tender piece of meat located near the thigh, chicken oysters are also known as "the chef's reward", as they are often surreptitiously devoured before serving. They're a treat for your body, too. This dark meat is rich in zinc and iron—for immunity and energy production—along with vitamins A and K. Plus, research by the NYU School of Medicine suggests the amino acid taurine may have benefits for heart health. To find the oysters, look for two small pieces of meat on either side of the backbone. Just don't tell anyone.



Men'sHealth

ONE-PIECE
EQUIPMENT WORKOUT

PART 8 OF 12:
PARALLETTES

PARALLEL

UNIVERSE

Parallettes can amplify your bodyweight training
for greater core and total-body rewards.
Here's how you can become stronger,
leaner and fitter—just like elite gymnasts
who use bars to build their bodies.

WORDS BY MH STAFF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BYRON KEULEMANS

AT FIRST GLANCE, PARALLETTES MAY SEEM A LITTLE... STRANGE.

If you aren't into gymnastics or calisthenics, you probably won't be too familiar with this U-shaped portable training tool. But here's the thing: even though you won't find them in most gyms or homes, they're a hidden treasure trove of gymnastic-like gains. Parallettes aren't reserved for professional routines or rehab work—anyone can use them to build a rock-hard core and sleeve-straining shoulders and arms. Even better, they can offer even more than that if you choose the right moves and nail the technique. Sounds too good to be true? Well, we've got proof: ever watched the gymnasts at the Olympics? They're metahumans. If you want to unlock some of the same bodyweight strength, stamina and flexibility, you'll need to spend quality time on parallettes.

Parallettes are the smaller siblings of the full-sized parallel bars found in gymnastics. But don't be fooled—even though they're a concentrated version, they offer supersized muscle-building benefits. The science of swell here comes down to adding more space between your ultimate training tool (your body) and the floor. This equals more range of motion and higher demand on your total-body strength, stamina and stabilisation. This extra work recruits more muscle fibre and sprinkles instability into the mix, which dials up your core work and body control.

Think of paralletes as a bodyweight force multiplier. It ratchets up the difficulty by adding more gravity-driven weight and a deeper range of motion, but it doesn't increase the injury risk. That's because you aren't dealing with barbells or heavy objects. These are primarily self-limiting moves—if you can't achieve the movement, you can scale them down to less demanding versions. Combine this with the fact that the parallettes are better at training your central nervous system, and you have a tool that can complement anyone's training plan and fitness goals.

So, even though you probably won't be cranking out full planches or free-standing handstand push-ups anytime soon, there are plenty of benefits you can unlock instantly with this gymnastic home tool.

SO, WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE PARALLETTES?

It offers fitness but in a fun, gymnastic-flavoured way. Parallettes are micro versions of the jungle gyms and bar-filled playgrounds you played in as a kid. They offer a safe way to build foundational strength and shore up weak links, including wrist and shoulder stability. It's also about training through learning skills and levelling up your body control.

Like gymnastics, a bodyweight routine which harnesses parallettes offers a wide range of health and fitness benefits as it safely targets all your major muscle groups. The benefits don't end there, though: parallettes can help you carve a more robust core that transfers more power and control to your limbs. It's like adding 4x4 traction control to your movement: having a stronger core means you're much better at moving and performing.

To sum up, you get to burn fat, build total-body strength, upgrade your joint stability, and hone your core power—all while having fun on a mini-jungle gym at home. It ticks all the critical training boxes for fighting metabolic conditions and improving health markers. Most importantly, it also offers you a proven plan that combines fun and gymnastic challenges to unlock compound gains in the long term.

WHERE CAN I FIND THEM?

The good news: parallettes are relatively affordable and durable home workout investments that deliver plenty of training value. The bad news: you may be tempted to make your own using PVC, plumbing pipe or wood, and while we're all for DIY to save hard-earned moola, you need to be careful. Even if your craftmanship is faultless (which we're sure it would be), the plastic options aren't as rigid, solid and durable as the metal ones in this list. There's one other factor you need to keep in mind: the height of the bars. Push-up bars are the smaller cousins of parallettes, and they're just slightly raised off the ground. The taller options (sometimes called equalisers or dip bars) offer more difficulty and versatility for gymnasts, acrobats and the calisthenic elite. But you can (and should) start with the shorter options. As always, safety comes first—you don't want to be injured or become the star of a painful fail video. Here are our three top options for your money and muscle-making potential:

1. THE PORTABLE POWER-UP: REBEL PARALLETTES (SHORT)

Are you just starting out? This smaller parallette setup is perfect. The smaller dimensions mean you won't be getting as much range of motion or gravity-fuelled resistance; it offers a gentler start to the world of gymnastic gains through static holds and bodyweight moves. Crafted from heavy-duty, lightweight steel with a glossy powder-coated finish, these bars won't sway, bend or move, regardless of your weight (unlike their PVC or plastic peers). Sold in pairs.
***R945,* rebelstore.co.za**

2. THE MUSCLE UPGRADE: REBEL PARALLETTES (TALL)

This bumblebee-coloured option is the professional parallette option. It's not as beginner-friendly or solid as the previous option, but it does unlock all the more advanced moves (and gains). The good news? You can also use scaled versions of the moves to safeguard your training. This metal set is super-light and portable, and solid under load. Sold in pairs.
***R995,* rebelstore.co.za**

3. THE PRO'S PICK: EQUALISER

Just like the bumblebee above, but slightly higher at 73cm. The tubular-steel bars are super-stable, and the rubberised handles and feet will ensure you don't slip and slide at precisely the wrong time. Each stand weighs 6kg, and the maximum load for each bar is 100kg (200kg in total). ***R1299,* gorillasports.co.za**

THE MAIN BENEFITS OF TRAINING WITH PARALLETTES

☐ Parallettes target your core and motor skills. It's a two-for-one combo: the static and dynamic moves develop impressive core strength and scale up your body coordination, balance and control.

☐ Lower injury risk, faster recovery. By cutting out heavy weights, you reduce the risk of injury while challenging yourself to move in new, different ways. This training, both the static and the dynamic work, is easier on your tendons, joints and muscles, which means you recover faster. This has long-term potential for more workouts that results in greater rewards.

☐ Develop your pressing strength. While there are some pulling options (the tall parallettes offer excellent row and pull moves), these tools are brilliant at building pushing power that translates into greater sporting performance. Parallettes build straight-arm and bent-arm pushing power, which translates into much greater functional rewards.

☐ **Train wherever you want. These bars, especially the short ones, are small enough to put in your car boot, and they're also relatively light: you don't need to cart around heavy dumbbells, kettlebells or barbell plates.**

☐ Parallettes are light on the wallet but heavy on long-term gains. Affordable, portable, and versatile: these U-shaped bars offer the classic trio of training value. And trust us: you will never outgrow the challenge it provides. Some moves and exercises test even the most advanced gymnasts, acrobats and calisthenic gurus.

☐ Parallettes develop wrist and shoulder stability. Have any wrist or shoulder issues? Rotator cuff issues are just one of the shoulder problems that plague most men at some stage in their lives. These ergonomically shaped bars are gentler to grip and offer a more natural hold, and the static holds and isometric moves help build up joint stability. It also provides another side benefit: it radically improves your forearm and grip strength. If Popeye had a training tool, this would be it.

WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

1. The broader range of motion provided by parallettes causes muscle lengthening for better overall strength. Parallette bars offer an increased range of motion in movements such as push-ups and dips, and this is proven to stretch the muscles more than conventional bodyweight exercises. *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning* has revealed this muscle lengthening can increase overall strength and muscle growth.

2. Isometric training unlocks several muscle and bone benefits. Studies in *The Journal of Clinical Hypertension* show that isometric exercise provides impressive rewards: increased muscle bulk and upper and lower body strength, increased bone density, and decreased likelihood of bone fractures.

3. Isometric training is excellent at lowering blood pressure. According to a meta-analysis of several studies in *The Journal of Sports Health*, isometric resistance training lowers systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, and mean arterial pressure. This effect was shown to be much greater than dynamic training or resistance training.

4. Dips are the greatest bodyweight exercise for chest and triceps development. Push-ups are more famous, but science shows that dips are better for building muscle. A comparison study using electromyographical testing of the Triceps Brachii and Pectoralis Major muscles during different bodyweight exercises found dips to be the muscle-building champion.

5. Bodyweight training offers a wide range of fitness benefits. Muscle growth is just the start. Research published in the *Journal of Physiology and Behaviour* showed that ten weeks of bodyweight training resulted in gains across seven out of nine parameters, including aerobic capacity (33% improvement), muscle endurance, especially the core (11% improvement), lower body power (6% improvement), and better flexibility.

Burnt Athens 5" Pro shorts,
R849 burnt.co.za
HS Fitness Parallettes, R1 350
www.sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

Model: Ernst Dinkelmann
IG: @ernst_dnk

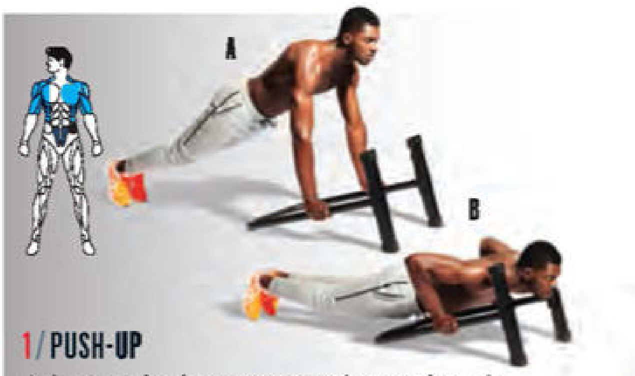
ONE PIECE OF KIT, 10 WAYS: PARALLETTES

HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR TOTAL-BODY GAINS

By Rory Allen, Personal Trainer

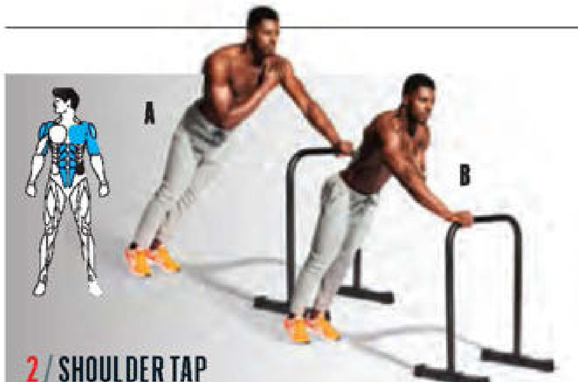
Parallettes are relatively cheap and don't take up too much space, especially considering their training payload when added to your home routine. Start off slowly with these moves if you've never done gymnastic or calisthenic work before—they may look unassuming, but trust us, your body will shake with the effort. Get ready to bring your physique in line:

CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION: Focus on working for 40 seconds on each move, then rest for 20 seconds before moving to the next. Do this circuit four times, but take a minute's rest between each circuit.



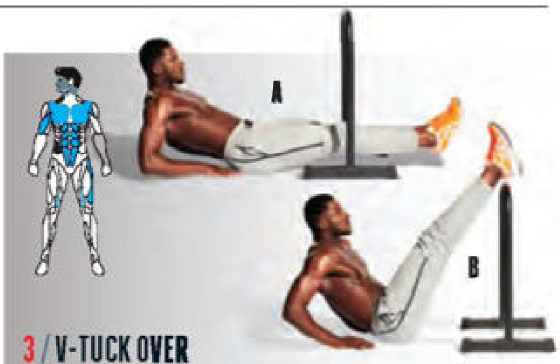
1 / PUSH-UP

Adopt a plank position with your hands gripping the parallettes (**A**). Lower your chest, keeping your elbows close to your sides (**B**). See how far down you can go before pushing back up to the start



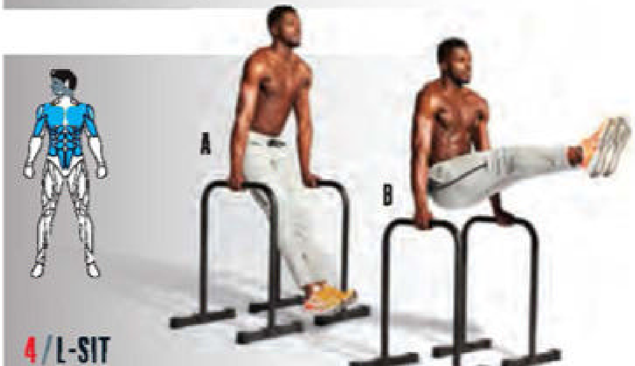
2 / SHOULDER TAP

Using one parallette, hold a high plank position with both hands on the frame. Keeping your hips steady, slowly take one hand off and tap the opposing shoulder (**A**). Replace your hand and repeat with the other arm (**B**).



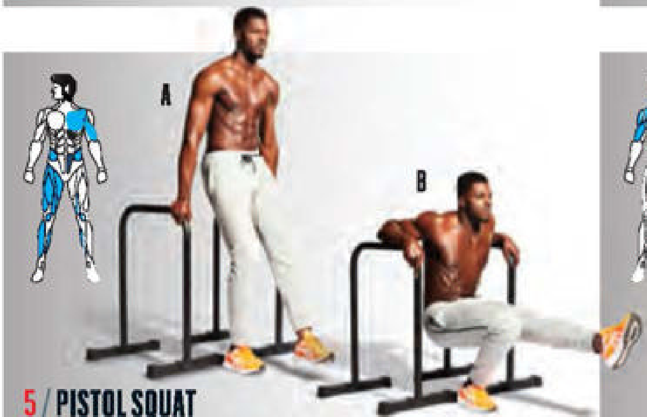
3 / V-TUCK OVER

Sit in front of a parallette with your chest up and your knees raised. From here, without touching the floor, straighten your legs under the parallette (**A**). Bring them back in and then straighten them again—this time over the parallette (**B**).



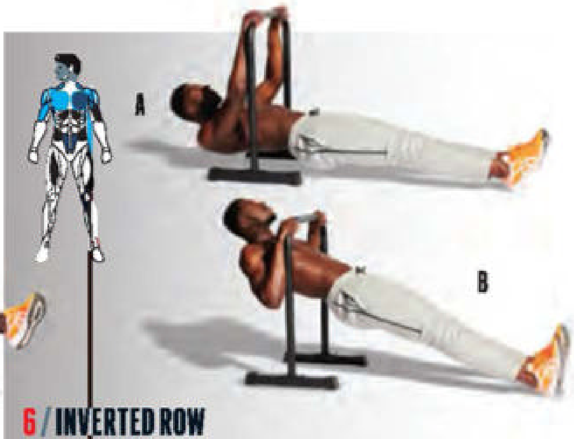
4 / L-SIT

Grip the parallettes with your wrists stacked on top of the frames and raise yourself until your feet are off the floor (**A**). Extend your legs in front of you and hold an L-shaped position with your knees locked out (**B**).



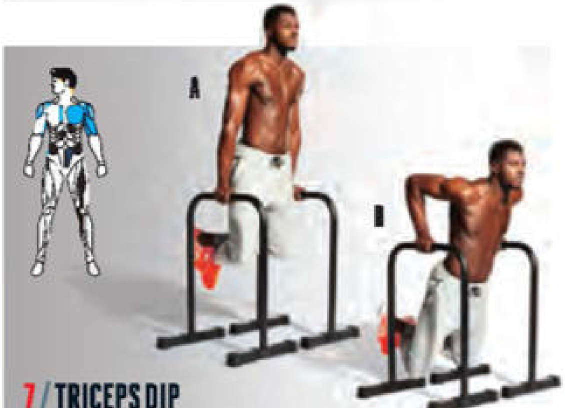
5 / PISTOL SQUAT

Gripping both bars, lift one leg from the ground and bend at the opposite knee (**A**). Squat towards the floor, keeping your lifted leg off the ground. Once the crease of your hips passes below your knee (**B**), pause and drive back up.



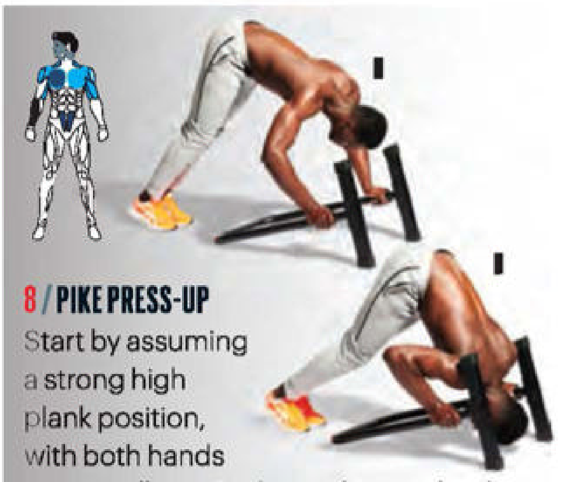
6 / INVERTED ROW

Lie on your back, with your chest under a parallette. Grab the bar using an overhand grip (**A**). Keeping your body straight, pull your chest towards the bar (**B**). Pause, then lower and repeat without resting on the floor.



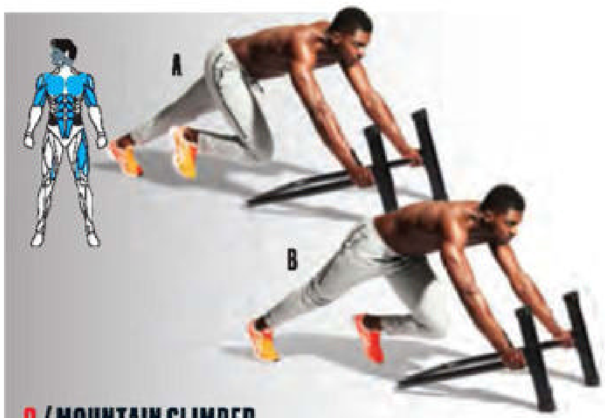
7 / TRICEPS DIP

Stand in the middle of the parallettes and press your body up. Lift your feet off the floor, bending at the knees (**A**). Slowly hinge at your elbows to allow your body to descend (**B**), then straighten your arms to lift yourself back up.



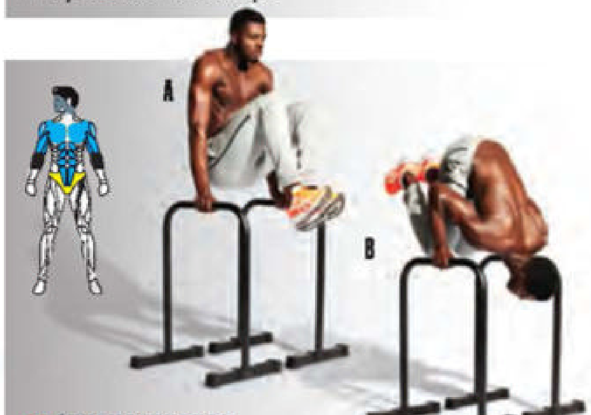
8 / PIKE PRESS-UP

Start by assuming a strong high plank position, with both hands on a parallette. Push your hips up but keep your toes on the floor (**A**). Lower your head down to the floor (**B**), then try to push straight back up.



9 / MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Gripping a parallette in the plank position, drive one leg towards your chest (**A**), then the other (**B**), and repeat. Contract your abdominals and try to keep your body in a straight line.



10 / TUCK PLENCHES

Support yourself on the parallettes with your feet off the floor. Assume an L-shape, then bend at the knees (**A**), tucking in your legs. Lean forward to lift your hips into the air (**B**). Reverse and return into an L-sit and repeat.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ANDREA MANZATI

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6th Chris Springate
7th Jac-Villiers van Huys...
1 day streak
Leaderboard
Be mindful
Be Mindful
Sleep
editation 101
gories
Focus
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Breathwork
Flowing Breath

Good afternoon, Nicholas

Points balance 1801

This week

60 /200

Duration 02:25:18
Distance 11.3 km
Steps 15612
Calories 1210

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Run 28 Apr 2022
Duration 01:14:20
Distance 4.1 km
Pace 18:16 min/km

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PRIME YOUR MUSCLES FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE p.100

BOOST YOUR MOBILITY AND BALANCE p.108

ADD POWER TO YOUR ENGINE p.110

UNLOCK NEW POWER & MUSCLE

BUILD EXPLOSIVE STRENGTH WITH THIS BARBELL MOVE p.106

+ GYM OF THE MONTH

BULLETPROOF YOUR PHYSIQUE

PRIME YOUR MUSCLES FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE WHILE SAFEGUARDING YOUR JOINTS WITH THIS SMART AND EFFICIENT REHAB/PREHAB ROUTINE. TIME TO MAKE INJURIES A THING OF THE PAST.

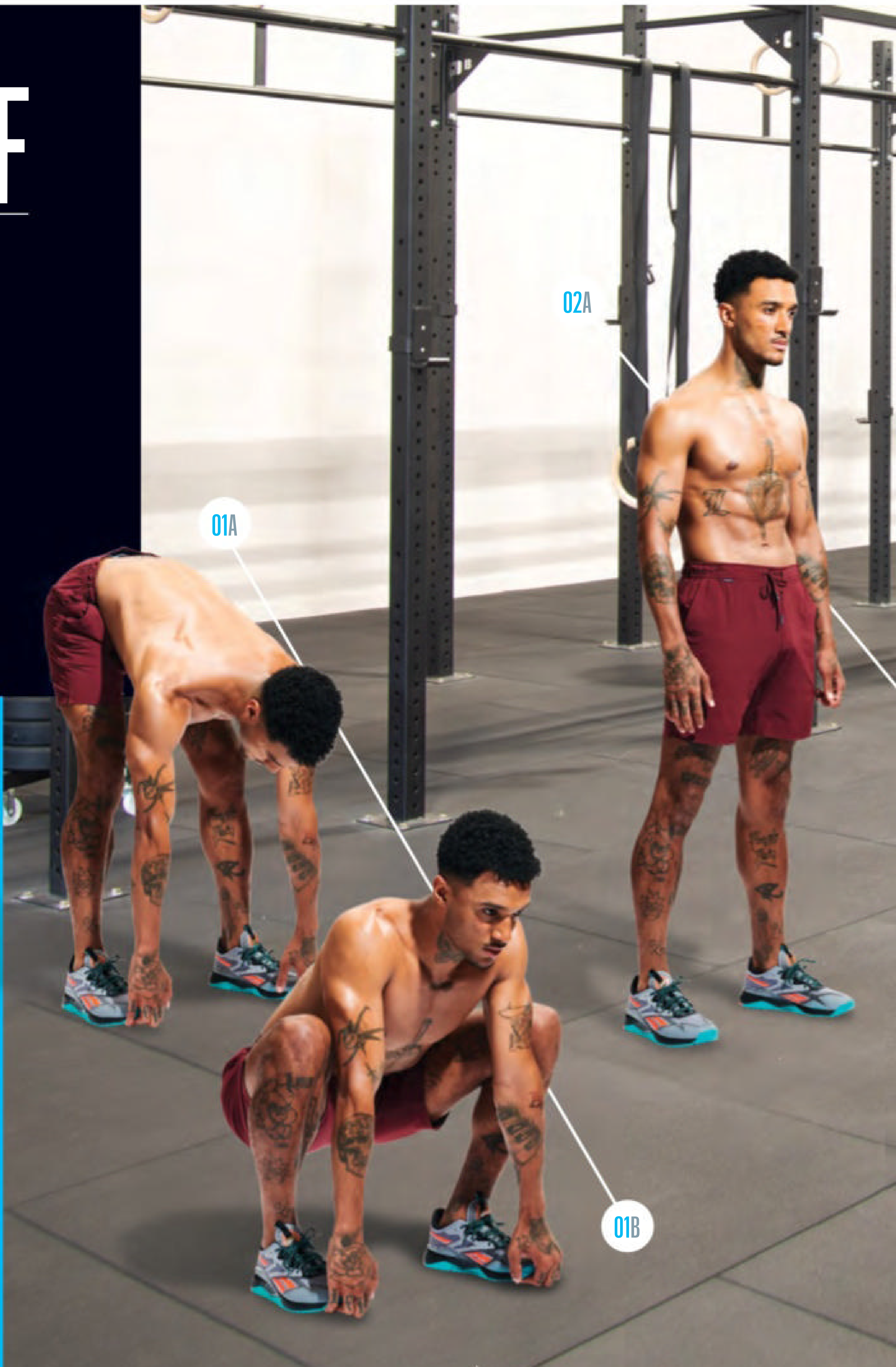
The fitness-sphere isn't short of advice on warm-ups, cool-downs, stretching and recovery. If anything, there may be too much info out there. If you followed it all, you'd probably find yourself with no time for the workout itself.

You know there's stuff you should be doing more of. We know you know. But whether you don't have the time, aren't sure where to start or you're just confused by the amount of advice, mobility work is rarely anyone's priority. To that, we can certainly relate.

The programme over these pages isn't revolutionary. It's a set of simple, time-savvy and effective exercises to help you achieve three goals: warming up efficiently; adding injury-proofing moves into your workout, without tagging on extra time; and giving you that little something on "off" days to keep the gears greased, the soreness down and your motivation high.

Make this your new swoley bible to dip into when you need it, or simply keep these moves in your back pocket for days when time is not on your side. Whatever you choose, we've got you covered for the boring stuff—so you can focus on the real fun.

WORDS: ANDREW TRACEY



01

HANDS-DOWN KANG SQUAT

10-1 reps

Tight hamstrings? Let's sort that. Reach down and grab the front of your feet, keeping your legs as straight as possible (A). Drop into a deep squat position, using your arms to drive your knees out and open your hips (B), before pushing your glutes back to the ceiling and repeating.

02

REACH AND TWIST LUNGE

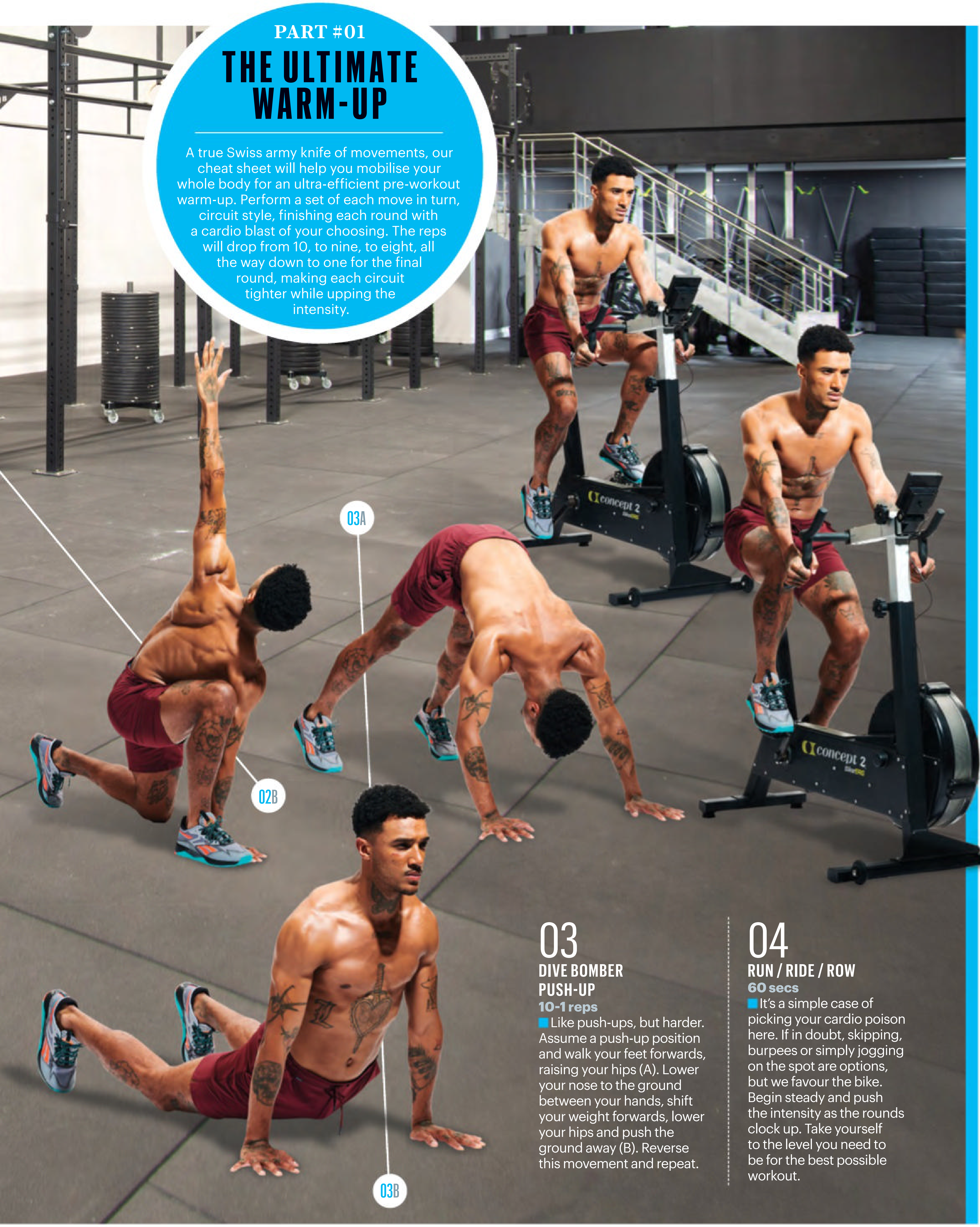
10-1 reps

This is called the world's greatest stretch for a reason. Stand tall and breathe deeply (A); lunge forwards with your right leg. Drop your right hand to the floor next to your foot and rotate your torso away from your leg, reaching up with your left hand (B). Quickly reverse the move to standing and switch legs.

PART #01

THE ULTIMATE WARM-UP

A true Swiss army knife of movements, our cheat sheet will help you mobilise your whole body for an ultra-efficient pre-workout warm-up. Perform a set of each move in turn, circuit style, finishing each round with a cardio blast of your choosing. The reps will drop from 10, to nine, to eight, all the way down to one for the final round, making each circuit tighter while upping the intensity.



03

DIVE BOMBER PUSH-UP

10-1 reps

Like push-ups, but harder. Assume a push-up position and walk your feet forwards, raising your hips (A). Lower your nose to the ground between your hands, shift your weight forwards, lower your hips and push the ground away (B). Reverse this movement and repeat.

04

RUN / RIDE / ROW

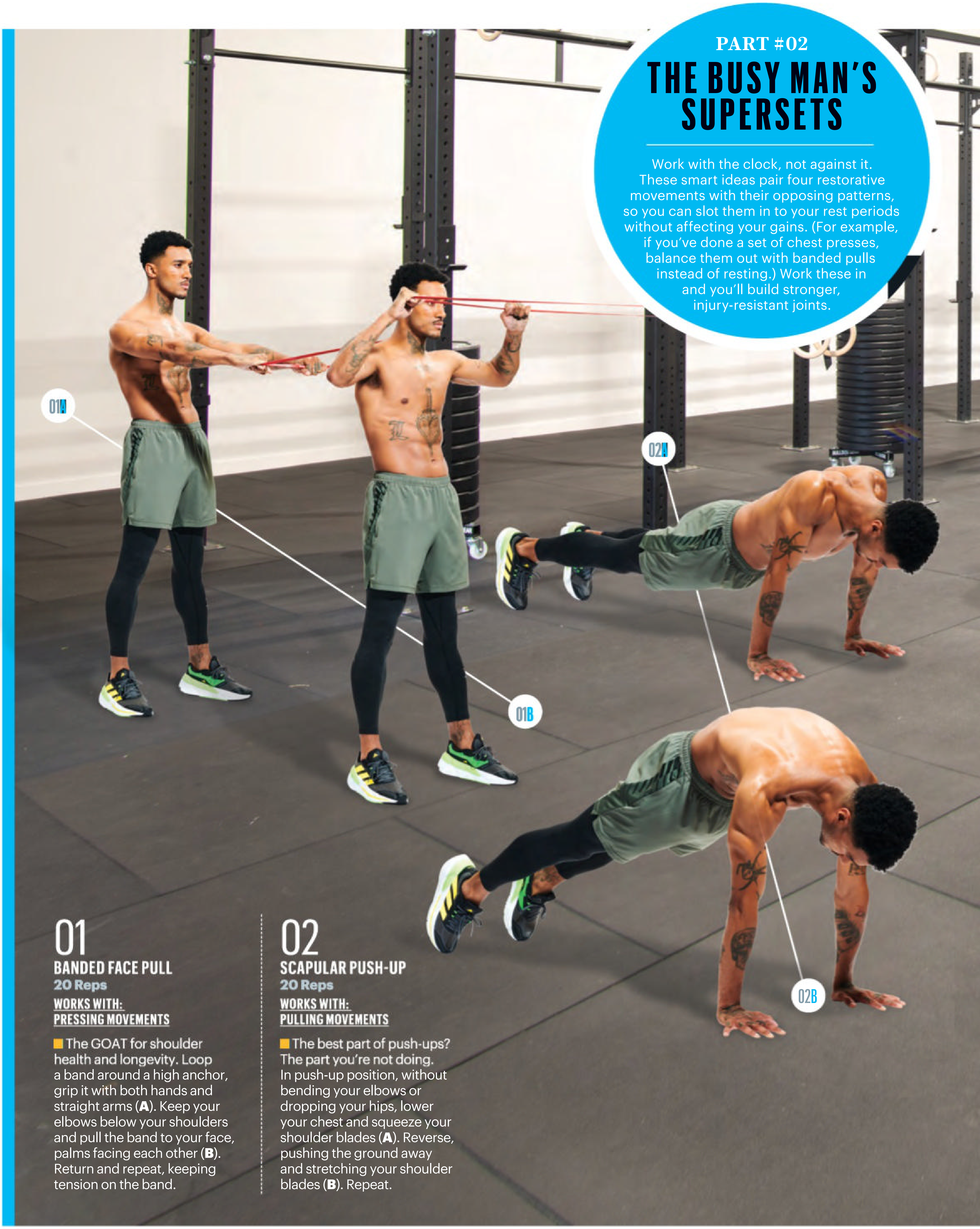
60 secs

It's a simple case of picking your cardio poison here. If in doubt, skipping, burpees or simply jogging on the spot are options, but we favour the bike. Begin steady and push the intensity as the rounds clock up. Take yourself to the level you need to be for the best possible workout.

PART #02

THE BUSY MAN'S SUPERSETS

Work with the clock, not against it. These smart ideas pair four restorative movements with their opposing patterns, so you can slot them in to your rest periods without affecting your gains. (For example, if you've done a set of chest presses, balance them out with banded pulls instead of resting.) Work these in and you'll build stronger, injury-resistant joints.



01

BANDED FACE PULL

20 Reps

WORKS WITH: PRESSING MOVEMENTS

The GOAT for shoulder health and longevity. Loop a band around a high anchor, grip it with both hands and straight arms (**A**). Keep your elbows below your shoulders and pull the band to your face, palms facing each other (**B**). Return and repeat, keeping tension on the band.

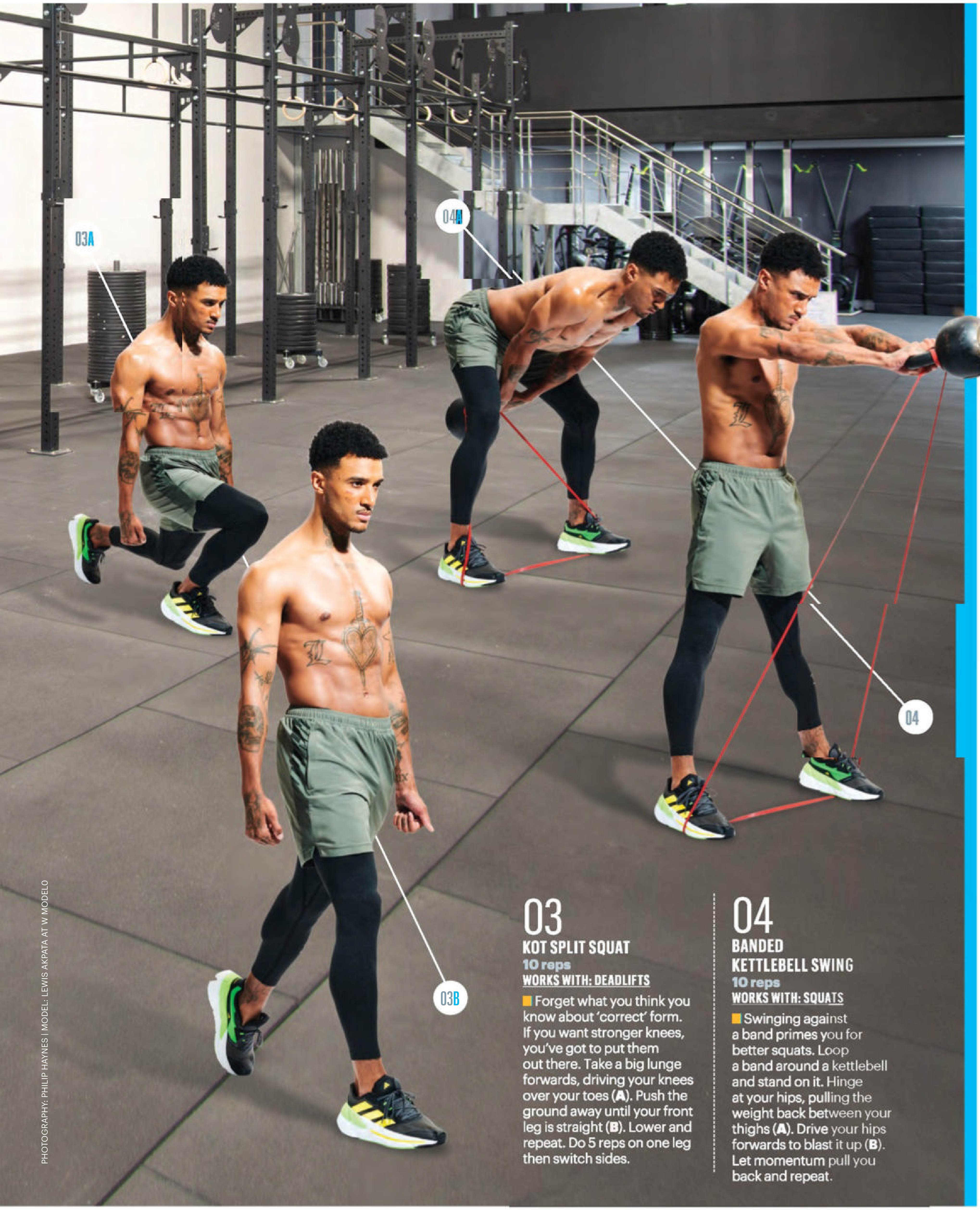
02

SCAPULAR PUSH-UP

20 Reps

WORKS WITH: PULLING MOVEMENTS

The best part of push-ups? The part you're not doing. In push-up position, without bending your elbows or dropping your hips, lower your chest and squeeze your shoulder blades (**A**). Reverse, pushing the ground away and stretching your shoulder blades (**B**). Repeat.



PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP HAYNES | MODEL: LEWIS AKPATA AT W MODELO

03

KOT SPLIT SQUAT

10 reps

WORKS WITH: DEADLIFTS

Forget what you think you know about 'correct' form. If you want stronger knees, you've got to put them out there. Take a big lunge forwards, driving your knees over your toes (**A**). Push the ground away until your front leg is straight (**B**). Lower and repeat. Do 5 reps on one leg then switch sides.

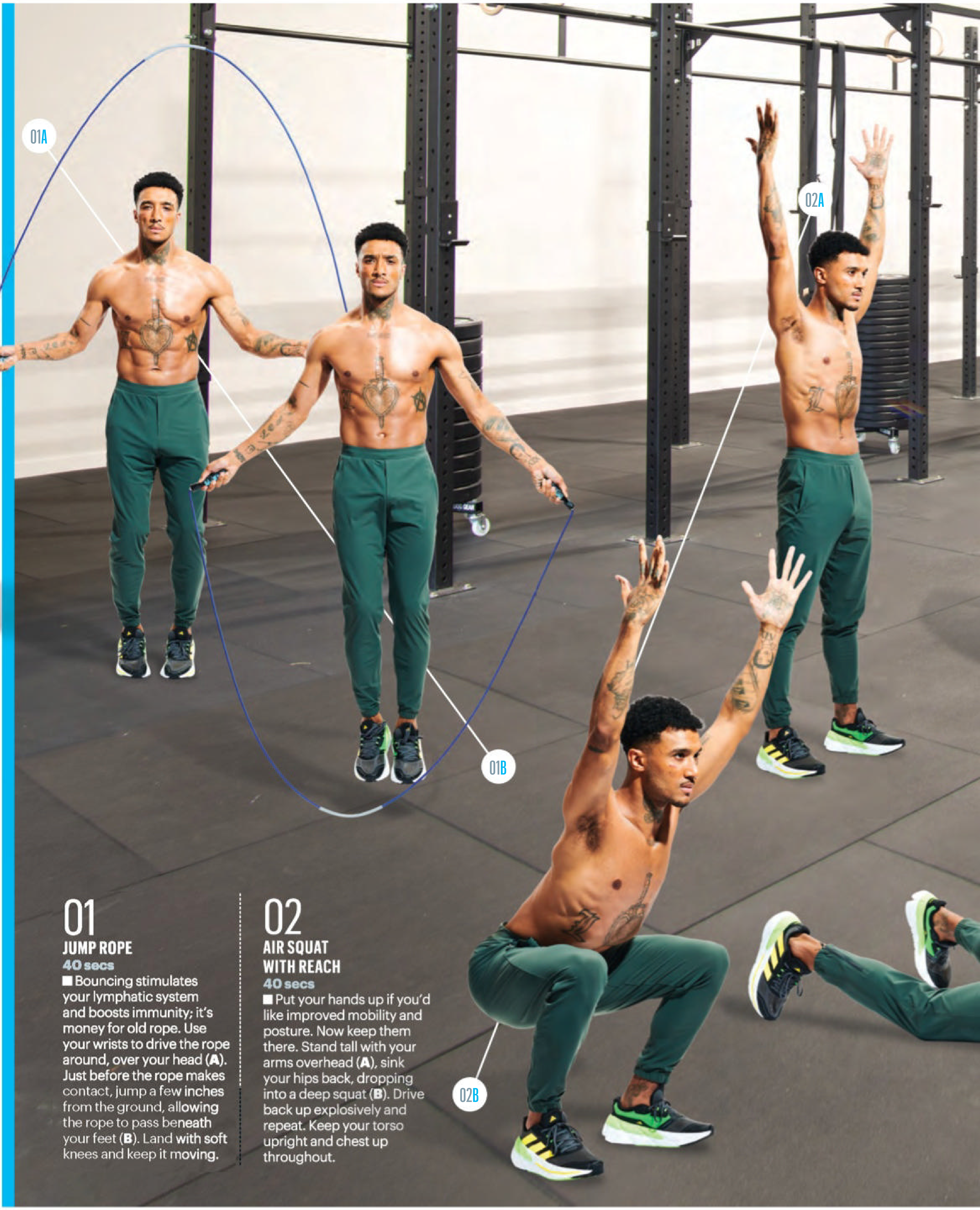
04

BANDED KETTLEBELL SWING

10 reps

WORKS WITH: SQUATS

Swinging against a band primes you for better squats. Loop a band around a kettlebell and stand on it. Hinge at your hips, pulling the weight back between your thighs (**A**). Drive your hips forwards to blast it up (**B**). Let momentum pull you back and repeat.

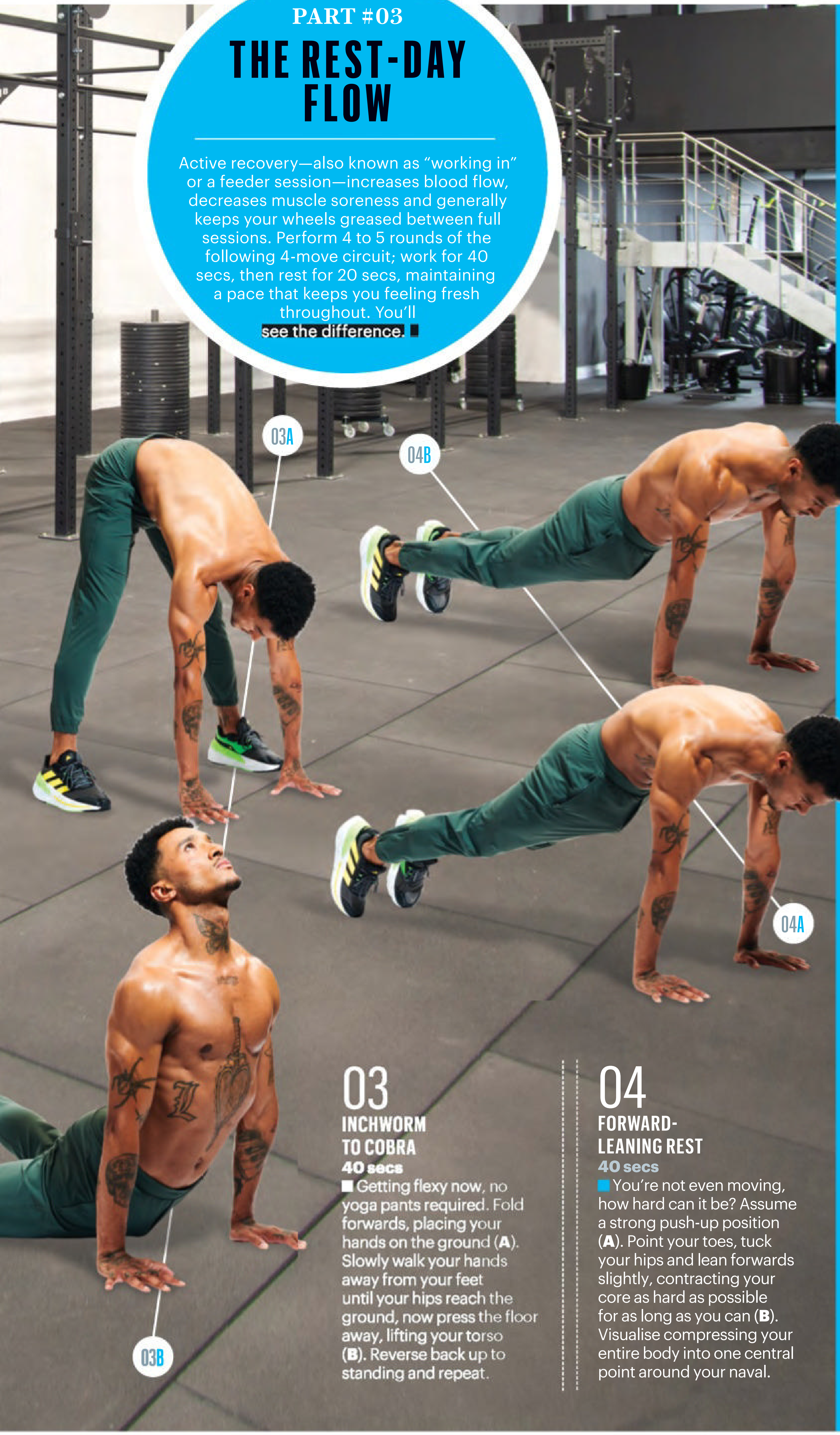


01
JUMP ROPE
40 secs

■ Bouncing stimulates your lymphatic system and boosts immunity; it's money for old rope. Use your wrists to drive the rope around, over your head (**A**). Just before the rope makes contact, jump a few inches from the ground, allowing the rope to pass beneath your feet (**B**). Land with soft knees and keep it moving.

02
AIR SQUAT WITH REACH
40 secs

■ Put your hands up if you'd like improved mobility and posture. Now keep them there. Stand tall with your arms overhead (**A**), sink your hips back, dropping into a deep squat (**B**). Drive back up explosively and repeat. Keep your torso upright and chest up throughout.



PART #03

THE REST-DAY FLOW

Active recovery—also known as "working in" or a feeder session—increases blood flow, decreases muscle soreness and generally keeps your wheels greased between full sessions. Perform 4 to 5 rounds of the following 4-move circuit; work for 40 secs, then rest for 20 secs, maintaining a pace that keeps you feeling fresh throughout. You'll see the difference. ■

03

INCHWORM TO COBRA

40 secs

■ Getting flexy now, no yoga pants required. Fold forwards, placing your hands on the ground (**A**). Slowly walk your hands away from your feet until your hips reach the ground, now press the floor away, lifting your torso (**B**). Reverse back up to standing and repeat.

04

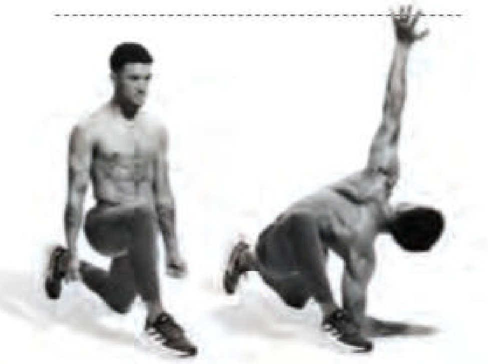
FORWARD-LEANING REST

40 secs

■ You're not even moving, how hard can it be? Assume a strong push-up position (**A**). Point your toes, tuck your hips and lean forwards slightly, contracting your core as hard as possible for as long as you can (**B**). Visualise compressing your entire body into one central point around your naval.

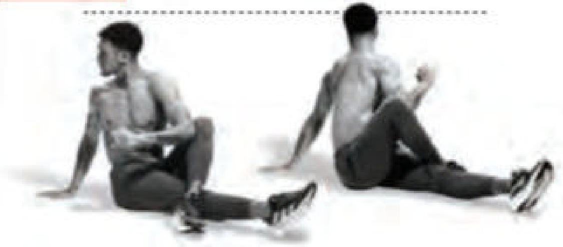
A STRETCH FOR EVERY OCCASION

Tight? Sore? Same here. Stretching may only provide temporary relief, but some days that's plenty. Make these your go-tos.



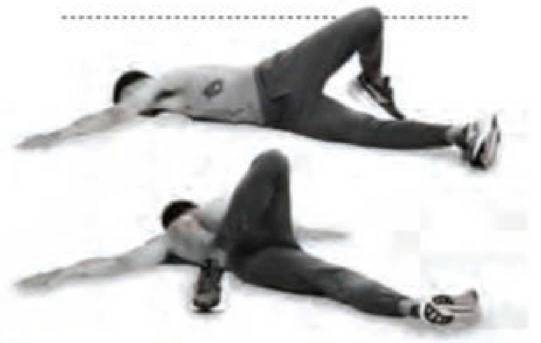
01 WORLD'S GREATEST STRETCH

Drop into a lunge, place your left elbow on the ground by your left foot, using your other hand for support. Lift your left arm, reaching up and rotating your torso to the left. **Repeat this 5 times before switching sides.**



02 SEATED TWIST POSTURE

Sit with your legs outstretched. Bend one leg, lifting your foot over the other, planting it next to the opposite knee. Twist your torso away from your bent leg. Drive your elbow into your leg to assist. **Hold for 30 secs; switch sides.**



03 SCORPION STRETCH

Lie face down, arms out to the side. Keep your chest on the ground, bend your left leg and lift it over your right, touching the floor on the opposite side. Pause here. **Alternate legs, easing into the deepest stretch possible.**

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25
SWEDEN

▸ **Alex Kanellis, the founder of Landmine University, banging out a landmine split jerk.**

FITNESS FUNDAMENTALS

EXPLOSIVE STRENGTH

LANDMINE UNIVERSITY'S FUN, FAST, AND INNOVATIVE RETHINK OF THE BARBELL CAN HELP YOU UNLOCK NEW POWER AND MUSCLE.

BY MILO F. BRYANT

You've used barbells before, but never like this. Alex Kanellis, the founder of the programme Landmine University, wants you to use your barbell as a "landmine," a unique tool that's gaining popularity among fitness heads. Kanellis wants you to put one end of your barbell on the floor, preferably in a landmine sleeve (see "Gear Up," right), and load the other end with weight. Next, grab the loaded end and lift it to your shoulder. Feel all that weight? Now you're set up to do a host of new and explosive exercises that can build serious muscle and power.

The concept isn't new. For decades, bodybuilders have used landmines to do everything from shoulder presses to rows, because landmines offer unusual resistance: as you lift your end higher, the weight gets slightly lighter, which allows bodybuilders to, say, squeeze their back muscles extra hard at the top of a landmine-row rep.

But trainers like Kanellis are using the landmine in new ways. With one end of the barbell anchored to the floor, the end you grab essentially functions as a "guided" dumbbell, letting you move it in any direction while it still provides slight stability. That makes it a perfect option for explosive exercises, like landmine cleans and snatches—the kinds of movements that catch your eye on Instagram and TikTok. Kanellis, whose IG account, @landmineuniversity, has 46 000 followers, sometimes lifts a loaded landmine from the floor while simultaneously leaping into the air and twisting his body to one side, building glute, ab and mid-back strength all at once.

It's moves like this that form the backbone of Landmine University, which helps you forge athleticism using only the landmine. Kanellis, a former University of Iowa athlete, developed the system after years of lifting. "Throughout my coaching career, I was looking for a good replacement for Olympic lifts," he says. "Because I like explosive weightlifting, but it's tough to teach."

The landmine doesn't have the barbell's limitations, according to certified strength and conditioning specialist David Otey. "Barbells force a fixed position, which may not be best for everyone... Landmine training allows for a variable bar path, single-side training options, and broader exercise selections." That helps explain Landmine U's rise in popularity. In 2021, Kanellis had 14 people in his first certification class; today, there are certified coaches in 18 countries. "It's something that fits in a lot of people's training regimens," he says.

GEAR UP

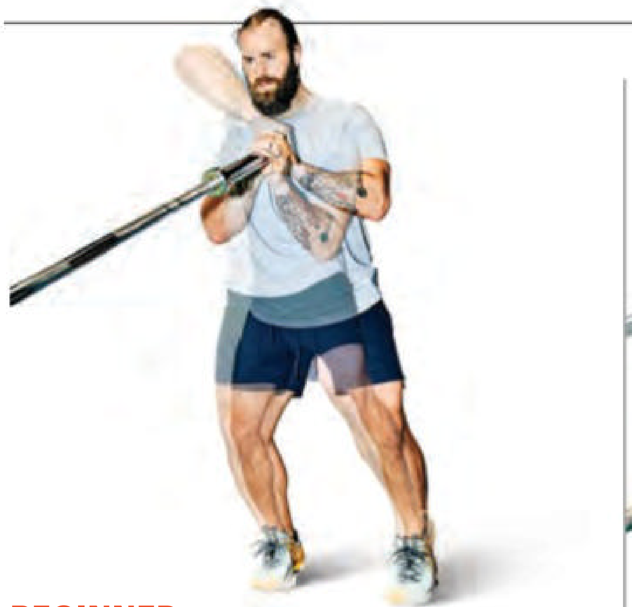
If you're training at home, try one of these landmine anchor setups.

BEGINNER DIY
For basic moves, cram a thick towel (or a few!) into a corner to anchor the barbell.

ADVANCED DIY
Place a 20kg plate on the floor and put a heavy dumbbell on the plate. Wedge one end of the barbell beneath the dumbbell handle, setting yourself up for press and squat variations.

GO PRO
The T-Bar Landmine Attachment (*R1 350, gymgear.co.za*) is the ideal sleeve, securing your barbell perfectly while offering great range of movement.

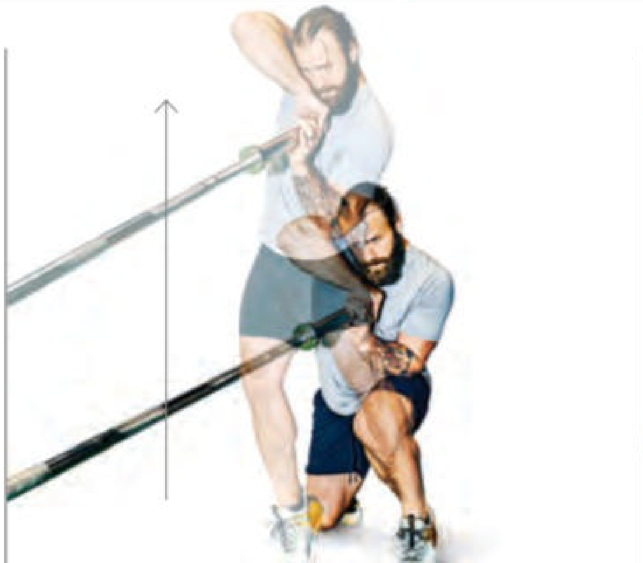
LANDMINE ZONE



BEGINNER

THE SCREWDRIVER

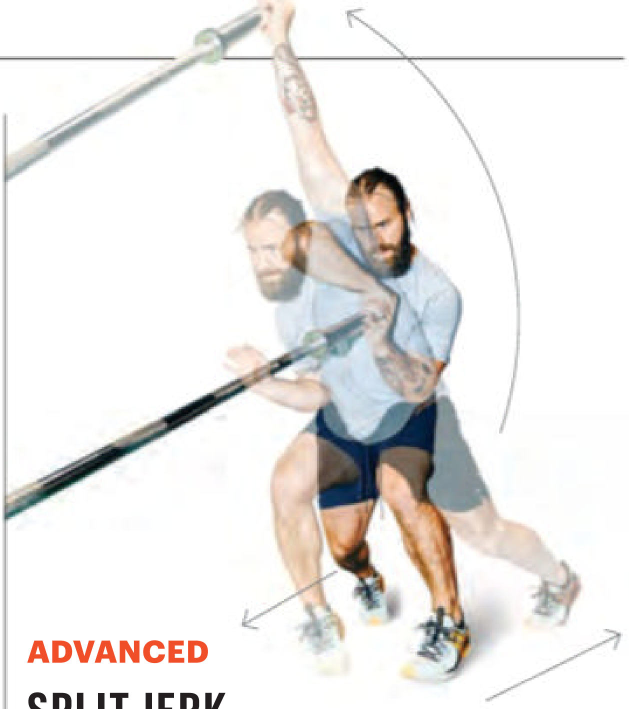
▶ Hold the top end of the barbell at your chest with an overhand grip. Point your left elbow down toward your left hip; point your right elbow up. Rotate the bell so your right elbow points down and your left points up. As you do this, raise your right heel and drive your right hip toward your elbow. That's 1 rep. Do 5 per side. Do 3 sets.



INTERMEDIATE

COILED REVERSE LUNGE

▶ Start in the end position of a screwdriver. Raise your right heel; continue to drive your left hip and left elbow together as you step back with your right leg and lower into a reverse lunge. Stand explosively. Rotate the bell so your left elbow drives toward the ceiling and repeat on the other side. That's 1 rep; do 3 sets of 8.



ADVANCED

SPLIT JERK

▶ Start in the end position of a screwdriver. Without losing tension, step back with your right foot. Now thrust your right foot forward and your left foot back, jumping slightly, and straighten your left arm, driving the bell up and pushing your right elbow toward your right hip. Return to the start. Do 3 sets of 6 per side.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TYLER JOE

BLAST YOUR BODY

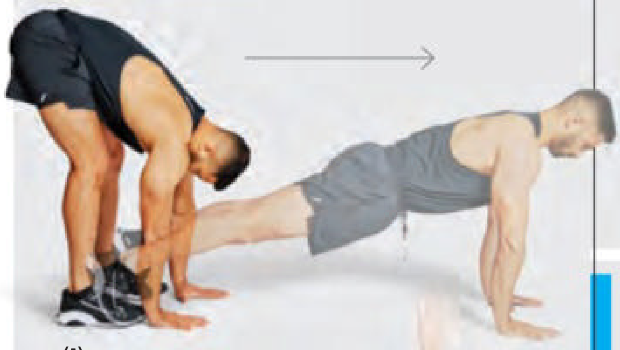
BUILD MUSCLE ON THE MOVE

AN AVERAGE WORKOUT HAS [redacted] STANDING IN MOSTLY ONE SPOT. ([redacted] THAT UP BY ADDING IN LUNGES, CRAWLS, LEAPS AND OTHER EXERCISES [redacted] HAVE YOU GOING SOMEWHERE. YOU'LL STRENGTHEN CRITICAL STABILISING MUSCLES—AND HAVE FUN, TOO.

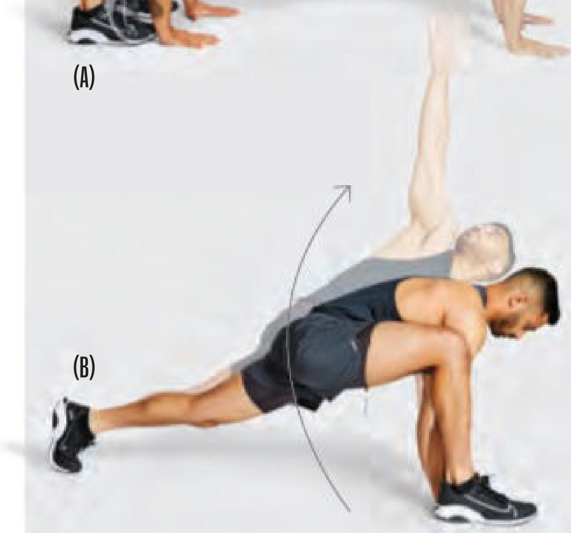
BY MILO F. BRYANT

DIRECTIONS: Do this workout 4 or 5 days a week—but not more than 2 days in a row. Go for a 10-minute walk or run on non-workout days.

WARMUP



(A)



(B)

WALKING SPIDERMAN LUNGE WITH ROTATION

▶ Start standing, then place your hands on the floor and walk them into push-up position (**A**). Step your right foot outside your right hand. Reach your right hand toward the ceiling (**B**). Reverse the movements back to push-up position, then walk your feet toward your hands. Stand up. Repeat on the other side. That's 1 rep; do 5.

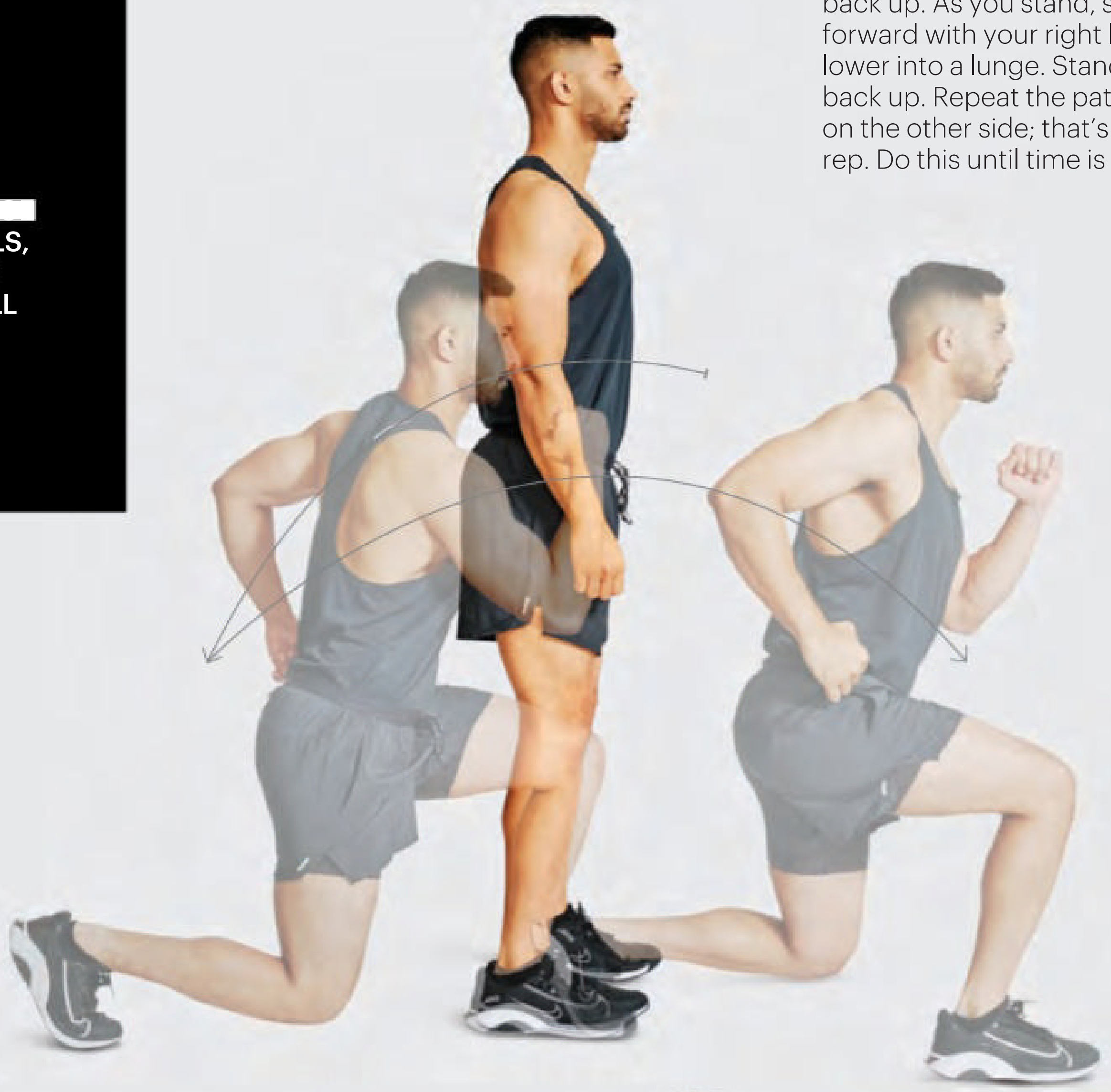
WORKOUT

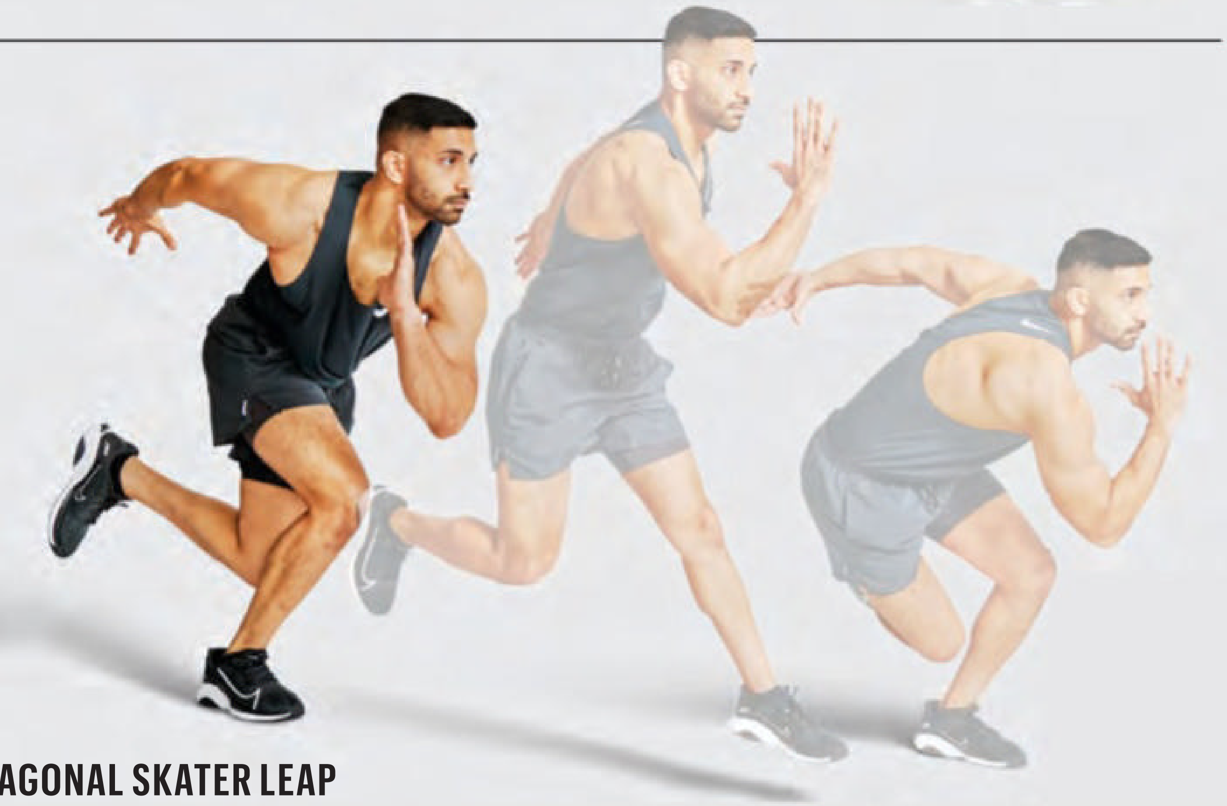
DIRECTIONS: Do the exercises in order, completing 4 sets of each move. Do each set for 40 seconds, then rest for 20 seconds.

1

WALKING PENDULUM LUNGE

▶ Start standing. Step your right leg backward and lower into a lunge. Stand back up. As you stand, step forward with your right leg; lower into a lunge. Stand back up. Repeat the pattern on the other side; that's 1 rep. Do this until time is up.





2

DIAGONAL SKATER LEAP

▶ Start standing, then lift your left foot off the floor. Shift it just behind your right foot. Take a small jump forward and to the left, landing on your left foot, knee bent. Shift your right foot behind your left and take another jump forward, this time leaping to the right. That's 1 rep. Repeat until time is up.

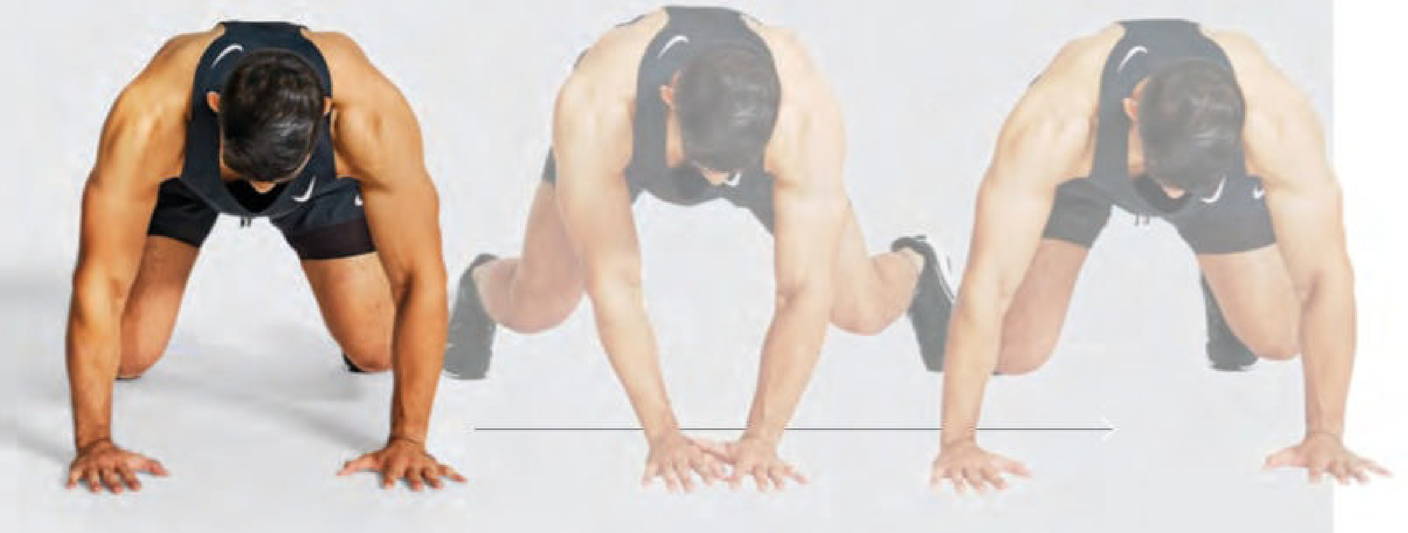
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TYLER JOE

▶ **FEATURED TRAINER: Milo F. Bryant** is a certified strength and conditioning specialist and the author of *Unstoppable After 40*, which teaches you how to stay strong as you age. Bryant, who is 51.

3

LATERAL BEAR CRAWL

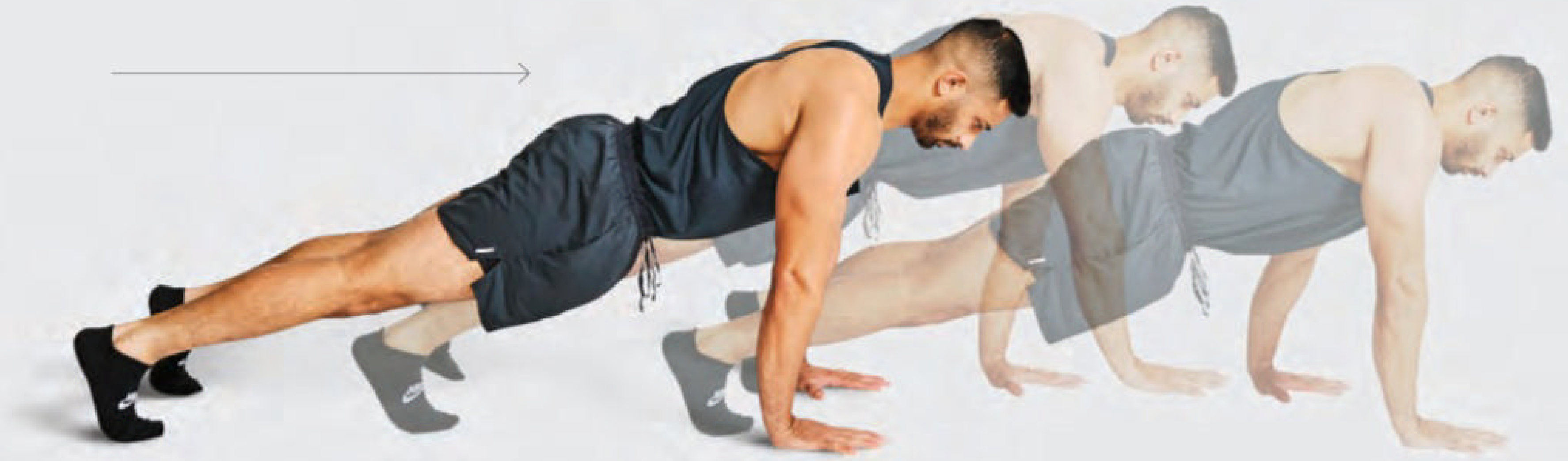
▶ Get on all fours, hands directly below your shoulders, knees in line with your wrists. Keeping your back flat, lift your knees so your shins are a few centimetres off the floor. This is the start. Now step to the left, moving your right arm and left leg at once. Follow by moving your left arm and right leg to the left. When you're out of space, repeat the pattern, this time moving back to the right. Continue doing this until time is up.



4

PUSH-UP PLANK DRAG

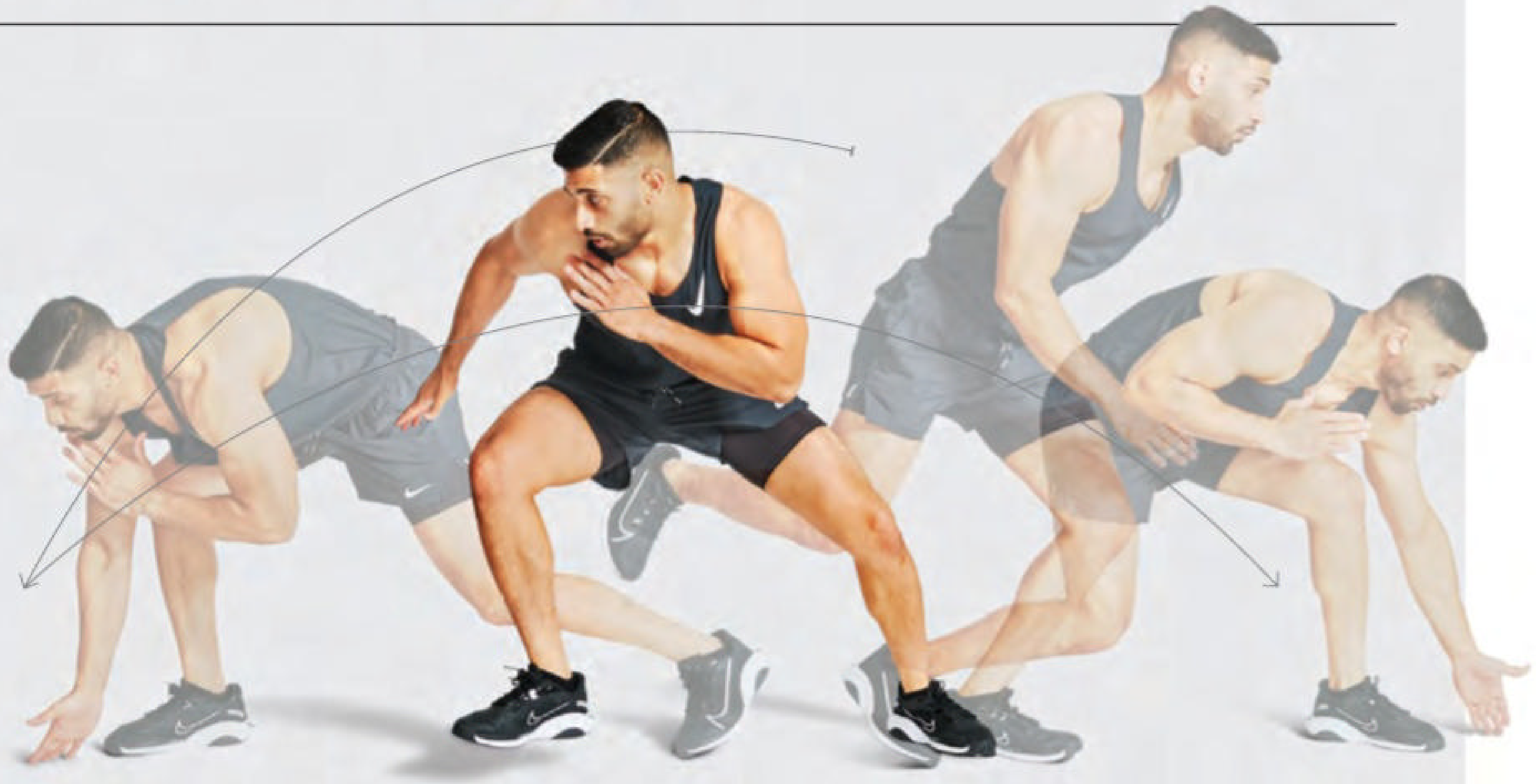
▶ Get in push-up position on a hardwood floor, hands directly below your shoulders, your feet on sliders or a towel or in a pair of socks that let you slide across the surface. Without bending your elbows, walk your right arm forward a few centimetres; follow by walking your left arm forward, dragging your feet as you go. Keep your hips and shoulders square to the floor. Repeat until time is up.



FINISHER

SHUTTLE RUN

▶ Place 2 cones, sneakers, or other objects about 15 feet apart. Start with your hand touching the object to the left. Then dash to the other object and touch it. Immediately dash back to the start. Repeat this pattern for 60 seconds. Rest 2 minutes. Do 4 sets.



THE BEST EXERCISE YOU'RE NOT DOING

ADD POWER TO YOUR ENGINE

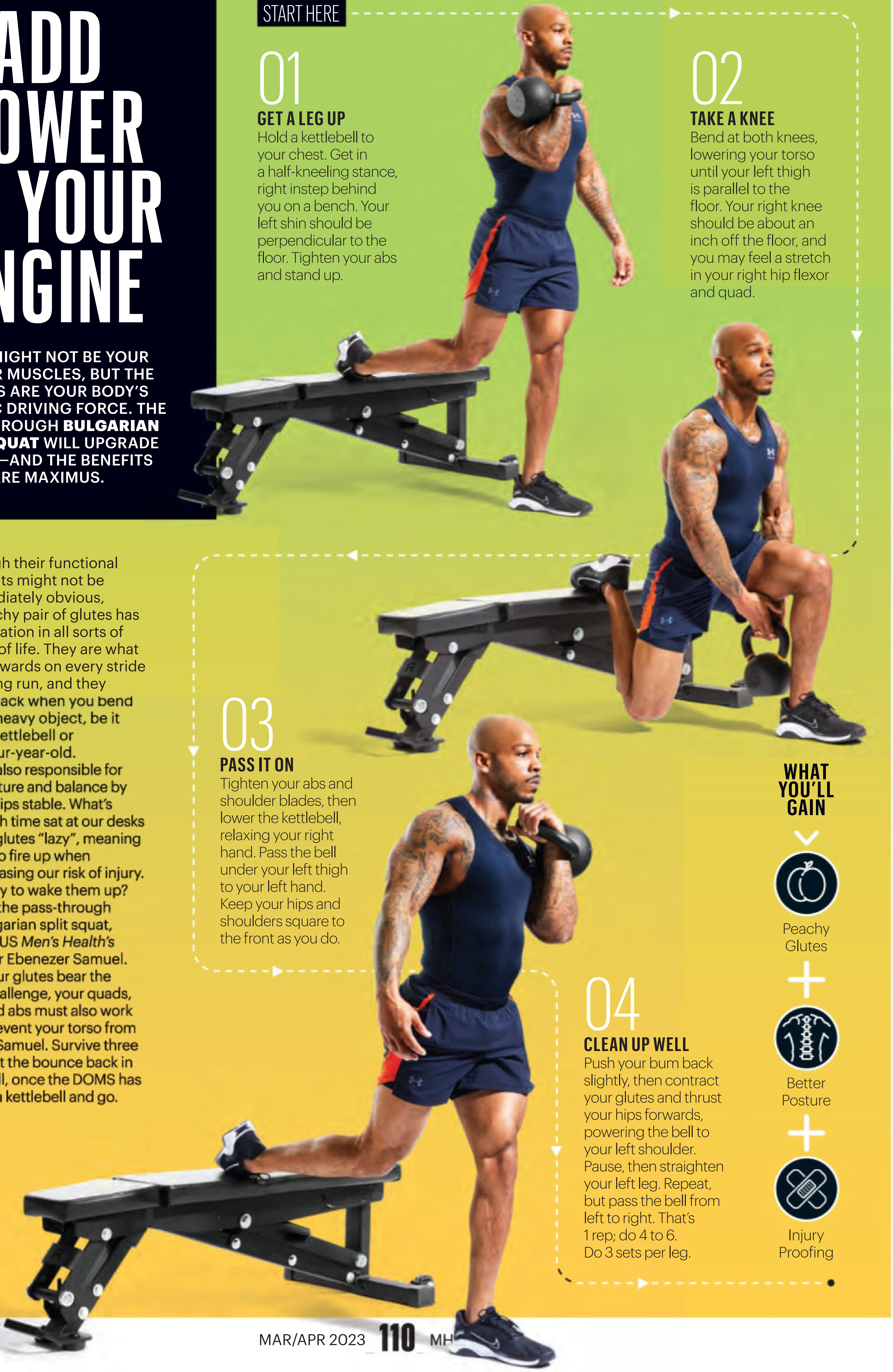
THEY MIGHT NOT BE YOUR MIRROR MUSCLES, BUT THE GLUTES ARE YOUR BODY'S ATHLETIC DRIVING FORCE. THE PASS-THROUGH BULGARIAN SPLIT SQUAT WILL UPGRADE YOURS—AND THE BENEFITS ARE MAXIMUS.

Though their functional benefits might not be immediately obvious, a peachy pair of glutes has application in all sorts of areas of life. They are what propel you forwards on every stride of your morning run, and they protect your back when you bend down to lift a heavy object, be it a sandbag, a kettlebell or a wriggling four-year-old.

Your rear is also responsible for improving posture and balance by keeping your hips stable. What's more, too much time sat at our desks can make our glutes "lazy", meaning they struggle to fire up when required, increasing our risk of injury.

The best way to wake them up? This hybrid of the pass-through lunge and Bulgarian split squat, prescribed by US *Men's Health's* fitness director Ebenezer Samuel.

"Though your glutes bear the brunt of the challenge, your quads, hamstrings and abs must also work overtime to prevent your torso from shifting," says Samuel. Survive three sets and it'll put the bounce back in your step... well, once the DOMS has cleared. Grab a kettlebell and go.



START HERE

01

GET A LEG UP

Hold a kettlebell to your chest. Get in a half-kneeling stance, right instep behind you on a bench. Your left shin should be perpendicular to the floor. Tighten your abs and stand up.

02

TAKE A KNEE

Bend at both knees, lowering your torso until your left thigh is parallel to the floor. Your right knee should be about an inch off the floor, and you may feel a stretch in your right hip flexor and quad.

03

PASS IT ON

Tighten your abs and shoulder blades, then lower the kettlebell, relaxing your right hand. Pass the bell under your left thigh to your left hand. Keep your hips and shoulders square to the front as you do.

04

CLEAN UP WELL

Push your bum back slightly, then contract your glutes and thrust your hips forwards, powering the bell to your left shoulder. Pause, then straighten your left leg. Repeat, but pass the bell from left to right. That's 1 rep; do 4 to 6. Do 3 sets per leg.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

Peachy Glutes

+

Better Posture

+

Injury Proofing

PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP FRIEDMAN

ENTER THE RING

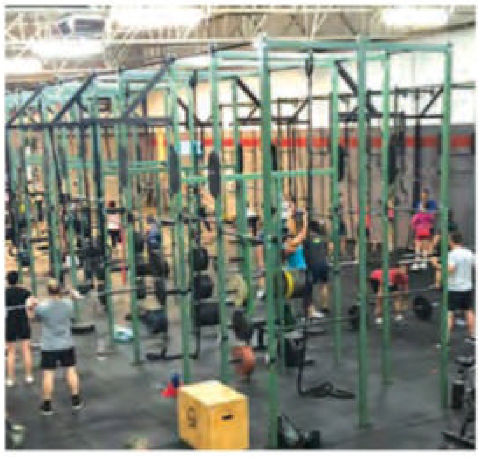
READY TO SPAR? **THE ARMOURY** WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO BASICS FOR WORKOUTS THAT NEVER PULL ANY PUNCHES.

Star YouTubers may be at the frontlines of boxing's resurgence, but it's training spots like The Armoury that are giving the sport serious staying power. "There is something elemental about the pounding of leather on pads and bags," says the owner Steve Burke. "Even more of the trading of blows in the ring, which combines the cut and thrust of the fighter with the strategic thinking of a chess player with the heart of a lion."

The gym was established nearly 13 years ago, and for all intents and purposes has become "somewhat of an institution", says Burke. The Armoury led the charge in bringing boxing back from the brink into the mainstream, opening the doors to anyone—regardless of their fitness level—to forge ring-ready fitness and put their fighting words to the test.

There are a range of different classes on offer, each helping you forge skills fundamental to success in the ring. Speed-Strength, for example, will run you through kettlebell workouts, sprints and bodyweight training to help you build and maintain boxing-specific strength and a solid fitness foundation. Skills and Sparring is exactly what it says on the tin, taking you through the necessities before you can enter the ring. Once you've had a chance to prove that you're comfortable with movement and technique as part of a non-contact practice scenario, you'll don protective gear for a full-contact bout under the supervision of the gym's extremely experienced trainers. In the aftermath, you'll get a recap of your performance and answers to any questions you might have after the session. The goal of these classes is to gear up for your very own fight night, an opportunity to prove your skills against other members.

"The team here has been carefully selected and are passionate about sharing the benefits of boxing and boxing training," says Burke. "Most often the journey to fight night is a personal transformation and the coaches nurture their charges through thrills and crises of confidence as they inevitably have to learn to take it on the chin." But if this all sounds too intimidating, you can still reap the rewards of the myriad of no-nonsense fitness training sessions on offer at the gym, says Burke. And, yes, you'll get seriously fit if you're committed.



The Armoury
armouryboxing.com

B2, Buchanan Square, 160
Sir Lowry Rd, Woodstock,
Cape Town, 7925

Membership
R749 nets you a full membership so you can train by yourself any time and take part in as many classes as you like.

23

Of every kind of boxing bag you could ever need.

Elevated boxing ring for year-round training and regular fight nights.

BEST GYMS IN SA MAR '23

IMAGES SUPPLIED

SUPER SIZED

BEST GYMS IN SA APR '23

CROSSFIT LEO IS A BOX OF EPIC PROPORTIONS THAT HOUSES A COMMUNITY WITH EVEN BIGGER ASPIRATIONS. COME HERE TO SQUAD UP, SWEAT AND FORGE MUSCLE THAT LASTS.

W"We've created a culture that we've built over ten years," says Walter Pretorius, co-owner of the giant box. You'll find the avid CrossFitter amongst the acolytes training day in day out in the roomy warehouse space, "sweating for his sanity", as he puts it. The gym is a passion project, and the modern equipment and giant rigs are a testament to Pretorius' ambitious side hustle.

"I—just like the others—come here to clear my head, listen to Rock 'n' Roll and throw around weights," says Pretorius.

Walking into the gym, you'll be roped into the many classes that, like clockwork, take place every day. Classes are large, with 30 to 40 people tackling workouts of the day and the rest of the grueling regimen on offer. But this isn't an elite club, far from it. The doors are open to anyone of any fitness level, and the goal is simple: walk out of there fitter than when you first passed into its hallowed halls.

"I've watched people change their lifestyles, turn back the clock on chronic diseases," says Pretorius with pride.

Classes are overseen by a professional CrossFitter who is on hand to provide feedback on form, fitness and everything in between. "The coach is also there to create a vibe," adds Pretorius.

On the floor, you'll find a wide range of different fitness tools from Ski-ergs to bikes to every variation of shifting tin you can imagine. Thanks to the space's size, you'll have access to your own personal workout space and won't have to worry about swinging a kettlebell and taking out an eye. Bottom line: it's the perfect mix of personal space and party atmosphere.

But the gym isn't all reps and no reprieve. Overlooking the voluminous space which is almost always echoing with the steady clink of weights, is a fully kitted recovery lounge stocked with supplements and other workout staples. Pretorius says CrossFit has serious staying power, and that's not just because the sport has snowballed into the top echelons of workout aspirations since its inception, but also because "with CrossFit, you never get to kick its ass.

"Even ten years later, there are still things that challenge me," he says.

Ready to test your body? There's a gym in Pretoria calling your name.

CrossFit Leo
crossfitleo.co.za

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Park, Pretoria, 0182

Membership
Unlimited classes will
cost just R990pm

27m

Two lengthy rigs ready for you to really train.

1000m^2

Leo's sprawling warehouse is armed with everything you need to get fit.

IMAGES SUPPLIED

THE MH DIRECTORY

LOOK GOOD AND FEEL EVEN BETTER WITH OUR SELECTION OF PRODUCTS DESIGNED TO ELEVATE EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE.

LEVEL UP YOUR LIFE

As you age, your circulatory system starts to deteriorate and your blood circulation becomes impaired, leading to a general downward trend in your health. We're talking energy loss, hair loss, stamina loss and libido loss among other things. **Vascamen** is here to combat that with their combination of herbs that aims to revitalise your energy, improve blood circulation, support your reproductive system and prostate and support your immune system. Visit *vascamen.co.za for more information (or pick it up at your nearest pharmacy).*

VASCAMEN
Unique supplement for men

COOL RUNNINGS

Even as we head into autumn, the temps don't drop much for us Saffers and your sweat sessions often aren't helped by the sweltering heat. That's why your gear needs to work overtime. Introducing: **2XU's Aero Vent Compression Shorts.** They're designed to alleviate overheating whilst running, featuring PWX VENT panels to improve air flow and keep you cool. *Head to 2xu.co.za to snag your pair.*

BREAK YOUR BEDROOM RUT

NEW
DR. LONG'S ENLARGE
30
HARDER • STRONGER • LONGER

Find yourself less interested in sex than the morning news lately? **Dr. Long's Enlarge** capsules are known to increase sexual performance and libido. But how? With its stand-out ingredients, that's how. Maca is known for promoting sexual vitality and increasing energy and sexual desire. Siberian ginseng increases endurance and resistance to environmental stress and L-arginine is used for erectile dysfunction and male infertility. While plenty of other ingredients also work to improve your life inside and outside the bedroom. *Find them at your nearest Dischem.*

A REASON TO SMILE

Want to make a small switch that will make a huge difference? Oral care brand **Jordan** has a range of eco-friendly products that will brighten your smile. Their lightweight toothbrush (weighing only 9.2 grams) has 50% less plastic than the conventional toothbrushes you've been using for years. Their whitening, cavity defence toothpaste range with flavours like mint, mango and liquorice is SLS free, vegan-certified and packaged in a 100% recyclable tube. *Drop by your nearest Clicks to get yours.*

Jordan
TASTEPASTE
TASTEPASTE
TASTEPASTE

BEAT BRAIN FOG

Did you know meditation boosts cognitive health and, when combined with Omega-3, can help reduce symptoms of that dreaded brain fog? And after one helluva first two months of 2023, we could use all the help we can get. That's why we're rolling out the yoga mats and tagging in **BIOPLUS VIT-ALITY OMEGA 3** to make sure we're thriving in 2023. And you can, too: get the BIOPLUS VIT-ALITY range at selected *Dis-Chem and Clicks stores nationwide.*

BIOPLUS VIT-ALITY
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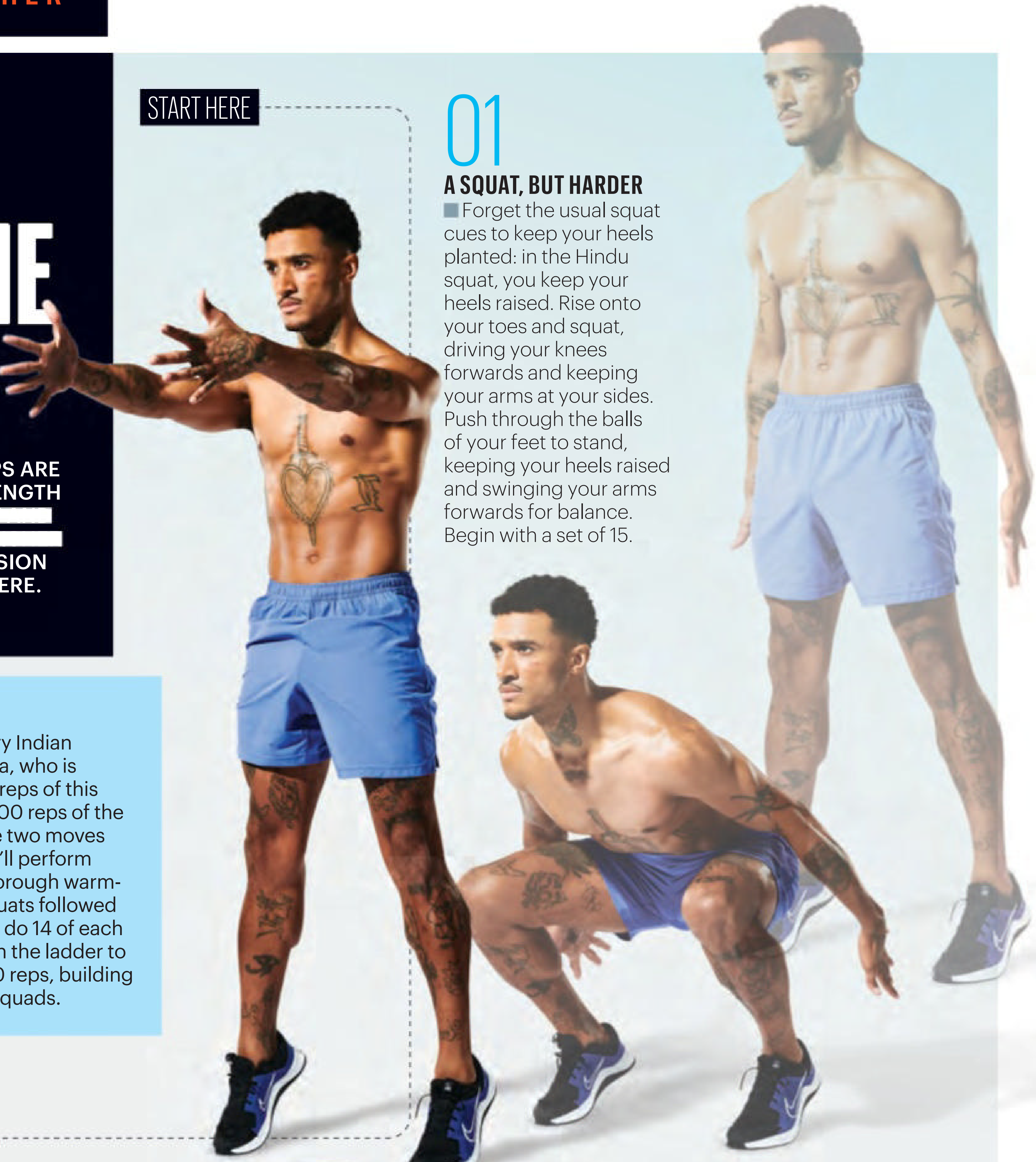
BOOST MOBILITY & BALANCE

GROW WITH THE FLOW

HINDU SQUATS AND PUSH-UPS ARE TRIALS OF BODYWEIGHT STRENGTH THAT ALSO BOOST MOBILI[redacted] BALANCE. OUR WORKOUT F[redacted] COMBINES BOTH FOR A SESSION YOU CAN PERFORM ANYWHERE.

THE FORMAT

Made famous by early 20th-century Indian wrestlers—such as The Great Gama, who is reputed to have performed 5 000 reps of this squat variation ("baithak") and 3 000 reps of the push-up ("dand") every day—these two moves should not be lost to the ages. You'll perform them in a ladder format. After a thorough warm-up (or workout), kick off with 15 squats followed by 15 push-ups. Jump back up and do 14 of each move, then 13, 12, continuing down the ladder to one of each. You'll do a total of 240 reps, building your chest, shoulders, triceps and quads.



01

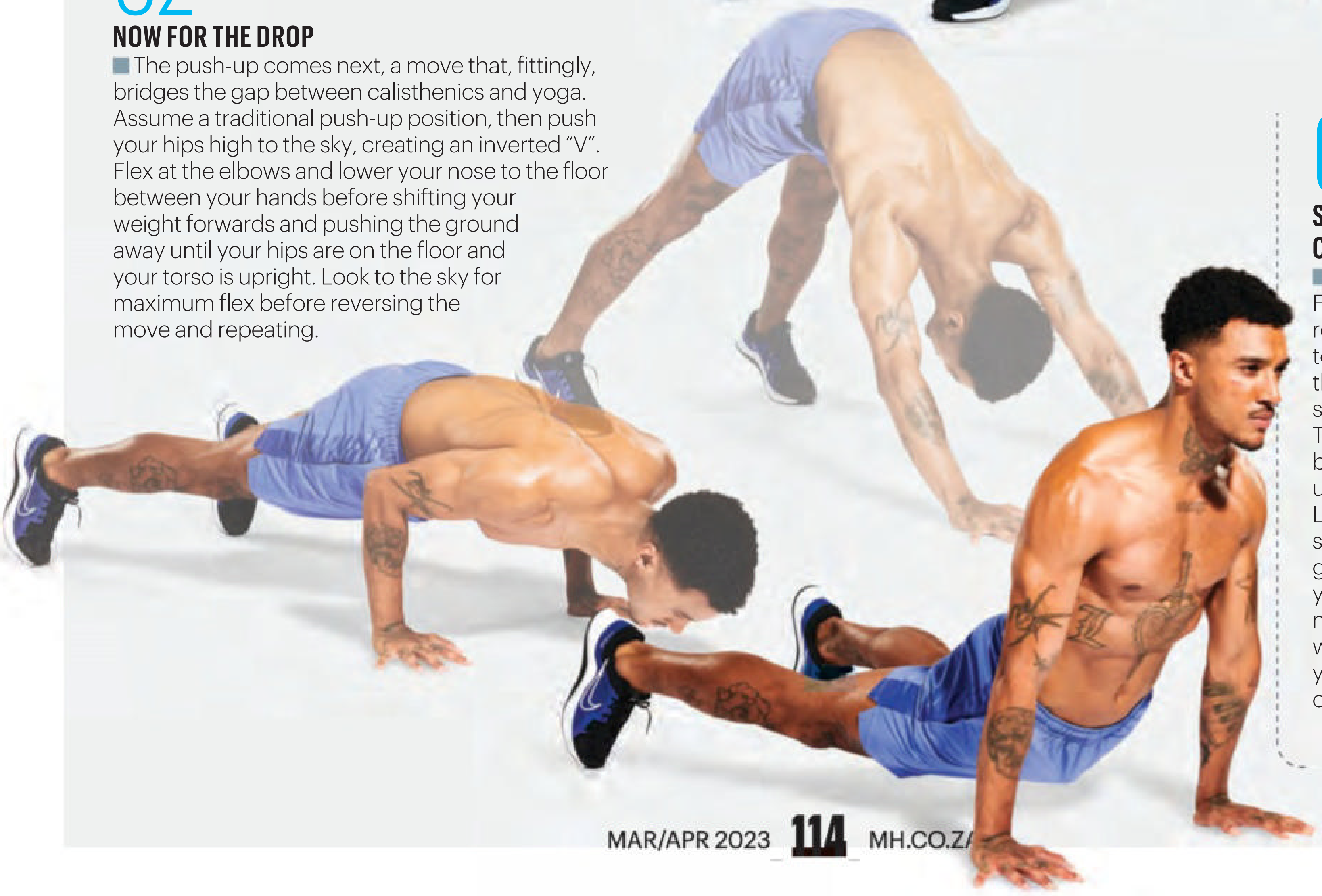
A SQUAT, BUT HARDER

■ Forget the usual squat cues to keep your heels planted: in the Hindu squat, you keep your heels raised. Rise onto your toes and squat, driving your knees forwards and keeping your arms at your sides. Push through the balls of your feet to stand, keeping your heels raised and swinging your arms forwards for balance. Begin with a set of 15.

02

NOW FOR THE DROP

■ The push-up comes next, a move that, fittingly, bridges the gap between calisthenics and yoga. Assume a traditional push-up position, then push your hips high to the sky, creating an inverted "V". Flex at the elbows and lower your nose to the floor between your hands before shifting your weight forwards and pushing the ground away until your hips are on the floor and your torso is upright. Look to the sky for maximum flex before reversing the move and repeating.



03

STAND UP, COUNT DOWN

■ Back to the legs. Forcing your body to repeatedly drive blood to your lower limbs then back up again spikes your heart rate. This style of training builds stamina while upping the calorie burn. Lose a rep with each set—the workload is getting lower, but so is your reprieve between moves, meaning fatigue will set in, fast. Keep your form tight and rest only as necessary.

FINISH

PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIP HAYNES

TOMMY HILFIGER
THIAGO ALCANTARA

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Cross Boundaries

Introducing the all-new, Toyota Gazoo Racing-inspired, Corolla Cross GR-Sport.

It's the perfect cross between a motorsport brand that's conquered some of the world's toughest races and an SUV that's built to Cross Boundaries.

The Corolla Cross GR-Sport has been fitted with specially tuned Gazoo Racing suspension configured to deliver sharper steering, better handling and braking with more stability during extreme cornering. It also features exclusive GR styling like a black roof, black 18" alloy wheels and an ultra-aggressive front grille.

Cross Boundaries in the all-new Corolla Cross GR-Sport.